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ABSTRACT

This dissertation reports on faculty from the Virginia Community College System who had engaged in academic activities abroad within the last five years. Eighty-seven faculty members completed a three-page written survey that included demographic, attitudinal, and open-ended questions about their experiences abroad. Interviews were also conducted. An analysis of the survey items and a content analysis of the interviews found that participants were very satisfied with their experiences and strongly believed that they gained personal and professional benefits in terms of understanding other cultures and countries. Participants, however, reported few changes in their teaching or administrative behavior. Further, an analysis of variance using the general linear model did not find any statistically significant relationships among select demographic characteristics and benefits in terms of increased knowledge, positive changes in attitude, and changes in performance. The study concludes with policy recommendations to enhance the participation of community college faculty in activities abroad and to use the opportunities represented by experienced faculty members to enhance international education in the colleges of the Virginia Community College System. Appended are the interview questions, questionnaire, participant correspondence, means and standard deviations for perceived benefits. (Contains 39 references and 11 tables.) (Author/RC)

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Faculty Academic Activities Abroad in the Virginia Community College System

A dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Arts at George Mason University.

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Faculty Academic Activities Abroad in the Virginia Community College System

by
Stephen Z. Kovacs
A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirement for the Degree
of
Doctor of Arts
Community College Education

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ABSTRACT

FACULTY ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES ABROAD IN THE VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

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George Mason University, 1997

Dissertation Director: Dr. Barbara A. Wyles

This research identifies those benefits perceived by community college faculty resulting from academic activities abroad. Eighty-seven faculty members in the Virginia Community College System who had engaged in academic activities abroad within the last five years completed a mailed, three-page written survey dealing with their experiences abroad. The survey included demographic items, 40 attitudinal items with a five-point, Likert-type scale for responses, and three open-ended questions. Ten of the 87 members also participated in a follow-up recorded interview. An analysis of the percentages of responses to the survey items and the content analysis of the interviews found that participants were very satisfied with their experiences and strongly believed that they gained personal and professional benefits in terms of understanding other cultures and countries. Participants, however, reported few changes in their teaching or administrative behavior. An analysis of variance using the General Linear Model did not find any statistically significant relationships among select demographic characteristics and benefits reflected by three scales reflecting benefits in terms of increased knowledge,

positive changes in attitude, and changes in performance. The three scales were constructed from the 40 attitudinal items in the survey. The study concludes with policy recommendations to enhance the participation of community college faculty in activities abroad and to use the opportunities represented by experienced faculty members to enhance international education on the colleges of the Virginia Community College System.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes five sections. First, there is an introductory discussion of the issues of international education and the role of the community college. The second section explains the need for the study and the theoretical framework used in the study. The third section presents the purpose and the specific aims of the study. The fourth section lists the delimitations, limitations, and definition of terms. The final section summarizes the significance of this study for the Virginia Community College System.

International Education and the Community College

The continuing evolution of the global economy and the resulting need to work with individuals from different cultures present special opportunities for American community colleges today. Community colleges have the potential to prepare significant numbers of Americans for the challenges of the 21st century. The new century will require an understanding of global forces that directly influence the daily lives of Americans.

The community college has achieved some success during the last decade in introducing a global perspective to its students under the broad effort termed international education. For the purposes of this study, the concept of international education is defined as the broad group of activities and programs in the community college directed

toward the goal of introducing a global perspective to students and faculty. The term global perspective, for the purposes of this study, is defined as a recognition and appreciation of the influence of foreign cultures and international economic forces on one's cultural, economic, and social circumstances.

International education includes, for example, activities ranging from educating faculty on global issues, revising curricula to incorporate information from cultures outside the United States, creating and administering international student exchanges, creating administrative organizations to conduct such activities, and finally, evaluating the effectiveness of these various educational activities. A first-ever national survey of community college international education programs, conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), identified 18 programs (Chase & Mahoney, 1996). Some examples of the programs were foreign language curricula, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, and study abroad opportunities. The AACC survey demonstrated that a variety of programs involving students and faculty were used. Using the AACC results as a start, the intention of this study is to focus on those programs that specifically deal with faculty and involved travel abroad: faculty international exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs.

The study of faculty programs was judged critical because of the importance of faculty to the teaching/learning enterprise. Faculty are the critical component in a community college because the community college is defined, in large part, by its emphasis on effective teaching. Thus, well-prepared, motivated faculty can play an important part in international education – only, however, if they are aware of global issues, other cultures, and international economic forces that influence themselves and

their students, and then express a *willingness* to introduce a global perspective to their students.

This study makes a basic assumption that community college faculty differ from the faculty of four-year institutions when participating in academic-related activities abroad. The two faculty differ in motives to participate and financial support available. Faculty at four-year schools are often motivated by professional needs to conduct research while abroad and ultimately to publish the results of their experiences in professional publications. Community college faculty do not face the same demands for doing research and publication; therefore, community college faculty are assumed to be motivated primarily to participate for different reasons. Faculty at four-year schools also have more financial support available to them to travel abroad than community college faculty, who are employed in generally small institutions with small budgets. As a consequence of financial constraints, community college faculty may (though not necessarily) be less well prepared to go abroad, spend less time abroad in the programs, or be more constrained in activities while abroad.

Given the basic assumption that faculty of four-year schools and the faculty at community colleges differ in motivation and expected benefits from travel abroad, many community colleges recognize the importance of faculty programs involving travel abroad in achieving the goals of international education in the community college. In the AACC survey, cited above, international faculty exchanges were reported by 26% of surveyed colleges, while 18% reported using faculty study abroad programs. Although not reported, one can assume that both programs can be expensive and time consuming relative to traditional alternative means of introducing a global perspective into the

curriculum such as offering another foreign language course. The AACC survey presents a clear indication of the use of faculty programs involving travel abroad. However, no systematic effort is available to determine the benefits for faculty participants in such programs in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) nor the attendant benefits to the colleges where these participants work. Only anecdotal reports are available to indicate that community college faculty are actively participating in a variety of academic-related activities abroad and are gaining benefits from such activity.

In summary, the growing need for a global perspective in the education of community college students and the important role played by faculty in the community college make an analysis of the perceived faculty benefits of these programs a timely and important issue. The purpose of this study is to identify and evaluate the benefits that faculty participants perceive from academic activities abroad and in particular, faculty international exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs, and to develop policy recommendations that would maximize the benefits of such programs in Virginia community colleges.

Need for the Study

There is currently no systematic evaluation of the benefits to faculty from the many teaching and administrative faculty international exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs recognized by the community colleges within the VCCS. Since these programs may often involve significant expenditures of time and money, the activities need to be studied carefully to understand the benefits achieved directly by participants and indirectly by their institutions. The Association of International Education Administrators has specifically identified the need for research in the area of evaluating

benefits to faculty participants in academic-related activities abroad (McCarthy, 1996). Moreover, the study may identify impediments to successful participation from the perspectives of faculty participants. The recognition of impediments and the development of appropriate policy recommendations to reduce such impediments offers the opportunity to increase significantly the benefits from faculty overseas academic programs.

The study has adopted a pragmatic theoretical framework. These two programs, faculty international exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs, as well as many other academic-related activities abroad, may be described as traditional approaches to learning about other cultures and countries. The conventional understanding is that any exposure to different peoples, places, and customs will increase knowledge and beneficially change attitudes in participants. No single theory appears to explain the advantages to faculty to travel abroad under either of the specific programs initially selected for this study.

Purpose and the Specific Aims

The purpose of the study is to identify and evaluate the reported perceived benefits of international exchanges and study-abroad programs to community college faculty participants in the general areas of increased knowledge, positive changes in attitudes, and changes in performance. The results of the data collection and data analyses lead to policy recommendations for the VCCS. The policy recommendations are intended to foster more effective use of these programs and other similar overseas activities. The specific statement of the problem for this study is:

What benefits do VCCS participants perceive from faculty international exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs in terms of knowledge, attitude, and

performance in teaching and administration; and what are the policy recommendations, based upon the identified benefits, that will enhance these and similar programs, remove impediments to programs, and significantly improve international education experiences in the VCCS?

Three specific aims are addressed:

Aim #1: To describe the perceived benefits, as reported by participants, in faculty international exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs.

Aim #2: To examine relationships between the participants' years of teaching, the amount of personal funds spent on the activity, length of time abroad in the activity, and the specific type of activity and the benefits reported from the activity that might influence policy recommendations.

Aim #3: To propose policy recommendations to improve the faculty international exchange programs and faculty study-abroad programs used within the VCCS, and consequently, to improve the international education effort in the community colleges in Virginia.

Delimitations and Limitations

A delimitation of the study is that the study uses data obtained exclusively from the self-reporting of faculty participants, gathered by means of both a written questionnaire and direct interviewing. The intended focus of the study is on the *reported* perceptions of participants in the general areas of benefits without other independent measures of benefits to participants. The rationale for this delimitation is that currently there are no systematic data on faculty participants, as a whole, in the VCCS. Although some participants have reported limited anecdotal benefits, the paucity of data justifies a broad survey-approach in order to identify fundamental areas of benefits. Based upon the results of the study, future research should focus on independent measures of behavior in addition to self-reported perceptions of participants.

Considering limitations, a primary limitation is the difficulty of ensuring that the appropriate faculty were identified and then provided the opportunity to complete the questionnaire. Preliminary research indicated that many of the community colleges in the state do not have an administrative coordinator knowledgeable of the travel activities of the faculty; therefore, it is likely that some faculty were not identified by the school as potential study participants. Thus, some faculty may have been unintentionally excluded from the study.

Another limitation of the study is that the data collected reflected one particular period for each participant. Although each participant was asked to report his or her perceptions at one period of time, each participant had a different length of time from the completion of the abroad activity and the time when the participant reported the benefits of the activity. It is recognized that the benefits perceived by a participant may, and

probably do, change with time. An individual reporting specific benefits of an overseas experience shortly upon returning home may identify different benefits some time after the experience or may judge those same experiences differently at a later date. Future longitudinal studies will have to be conducted to overcome this limitation.

Definition of Terms

The following operational definitions are used in the study.

Faculty

Faculty are those individuals identified primarily by the administration of each college who were full-time teaching or administrative faculty employed by the VCCS at start of this study, September 1996.

Academic-Related Activities Abroad

Initially these activities comprised two specific programs, faculty international exchanges and faculty study abroad programs. However, as the study progressed, it became clear that the definition should include any activity abroad, which had as its main focus academic activity. Simple personal vacations and recreational travel abroad, which do not have a primary goal of academic-related activity, are excluded. The activity had to have occurred since 1990 and involve traveling and living outside the United States for a minimum of one week.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of this study is presented in four chapters. Chapter II provides a review of pertinent literature on international education in higher education and faculty programs involving travel abroad. Chapter III describes the methods used in the study. The results of the study with discussion are presented in Chapter IV. Chapter V includes

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an analysis of the significance of the results and policy recommendations based upon the analysis, which could enhance faculty academic-related activities abroad in Virginia community colleges.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to international education and faculty programs. The first section presents the broad issue of international education in the community college. The second section discusses the faculty role in international education. The third section identifies the benefits from faculty exchanges and study-abroad programs. The fourth section presents a review of the Virginia community colleges programs. Finally, the chapter ends with a critique of the literature.

Overview of International Education in the Community College

American community colleges were the final players in the international education movement in higher education. A general consensus, in the early days of the community college movement at the end of World War II, was that community colleges would focus on the educational needs of the local communities in which they were located. However, by the late 1970s, the important role of the community college in international education was recognized (Boyer, 1979; Scanlon, 1990).

Fersh (1990) summarized that in 1979 the Presidential Commission on Foreign Languages and International Education identified community colleges as key institutions in the international education effort. Many community colleges were reluctant to accept such a role; however, by 1988, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges affirmed that international education was an important educational concern for community colleges.

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The acceptance of the importance of international education in the community college was based upon the recognition that the U.S. economy was becoming increasingly internationalized and that changes in the world directly affected the community college. Also the enrollment of recently arrived immigrants and foreign students increased. Additionally, the multinational activities of corporations in the local community increased the awareness of the importance of international education (Fersh, 1990).

Once community colleges recognized the need for international education, a broad definition of international education evolved (Raby, 1996a). One example of the inclusiveness of the concept is expressed as "a program of education devoted to the study of international understanding" (Mayes, 1981, p. 9). Another example, illustrating a detailed definition is:

> For some colleges, internationalizing the curriculum has meant a revitalization of foreign-language and study-abroad programs. Other colleges have developed new community-service and academic programs to train local businesses and entrepreneurs to participate in international trade. Still others have adopted college-wide interdisciplinary approaches...in a wide range of disciplines. (Cape and Colby, 1990, p. 109)

Although the concept is broadly defined, specific theoretical bases for international education have been proposed. Raby (1996b) posited that three educational paradigms have evolved for international education in the community college. The first paradigm is a holistic view of education with the emphasis of international education on "the whole person by transcending informal, non-formal, and formal aspects of learning to encourage comprehension of the by-products of a global environment, including international and intercultural relations" (Raby, 1996b, p. 112).

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The second paradigm focuses on global interrelationships. The understanding of the components of international cooperation and interdependency is viewed as critical for employment in business, technical, and paraprofessional sectors of a local or regional economy.

The third paradigm emphasizes the value of international education in forming global citizens by teaching diversity, sensitivity, empowerment, multicultural harmony, and tolerance. Raby stated that "the comprehension and appreciation of differences on a global scale directly correlate with the positive interaction with ethnic variations that exist within local areas. Through global knowledge, individuals question their own prejudices and biases and safeguard themselves against parochialism" (Raby, 1996b, p. 113).

The broad range of programs, activities, and services grouped under the concept of international education in the community college was confirmed by a recent American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) national survey involving 624 community colleges (Chase and Mahoney, 1996). The purpose of the AACC study was to identify for the first time international education activities in use in American community colleges.

The AACC survey grouped 18 individual programs and activities into six broad categories. These categories and the percentage of colleges reporting programs and activities in these categories were international curricula (79%), study abroad/exchange opportunities for students and faculty (49%), international community activities (43%); international business activities (27%), and campus-based international activities (23%; Chase and Mahoney, 1996, p. 3). Thus, nearly one half (49%) of the reporting

community colleges have programs involving foreign travel of students and faculty. Within this particular category of study abroad/exchange opportunities for students and faculty, 26% of the colleges reported *faculty* exchange programs, and 18% provided *faculty* study abroad programs (p. 5).

The AACC survey confirmed that faculty international exchange programs and faculty abroad programs are used by a substantial number of community colleges as components of the international education effort. Moreover, the survey concluded that 70% of the community colleges reported that their total international programs would increase either dramatically or moderately within the next five years.

Faculty Role in International Education

The importance of faculty in the international education effort at the university level has been summarized by McCarthy (1992). McCarthy stated that "a professor who lacks appreciation for the international perspective of his or her discipline cannot be expected to impart such appreciation to students. Therefore, a foundation of any major effort to internationalize must begin with a broadly based faculty development effort" (p. 2).

Khishtan (1990) examined whether faculty in four-year institutions were "worldmined," and whether any set of experiences or demographic characteristics distinguished those who were worldminded from faculty who were not. He used the term worldmined to reflect knowledge of and sensitivity to international and global issues such as war and peace. He found that the majority of the 293 faculty surveyed who demonstrated a high degree of worldmindedness had international experience, to include study or travel abroad; 60% attended overseas conferences, and 60% reported

using materials in class to promote worldmindedness. Khishtan concluded that faculty should be encouraged to travel and participate in professional activities abroad to support international education efforts at the university level. At the same time, administrators recognized the difficulty in having substantial numbers of faculty participate in programs involving extended periods abroad, i.e., six months or more (Burn, 1990).

At the community college level, the development of faculty has also been described as an excellent, if not vital, method to achieve heightened support and expertise in international education (Mayes, 1981; Edwards and Tonkin, 1990; Norfleet and Wilcox, 1992). Mayes summarized early studies in the 1970s, which showed that faculty exchanges and group study-abroad programs achieved some success in developing general attitudes supporting international education in the community college.

More recent studies have also emphasized the importance of faculty exchanges and study-abroad programs in the international education effort. Faculty exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs were included in many articles dealing with international education in the community college starting in the 1980s. These articles focused on establishing guidelines and procedures to create faculty exchanges and faculty study abroad programs. However, little attention was given to the systematic analysis of such overseas experiences on faculty participants and their colleges (Greenfield, 1991; McCarthy, 1992; Campion and Bostic, 1993; Tsunoda, 1994; King and Koller, 1995).

Specific examples of the articles that focused on procedures include Rush's (1992) integrated model intended to create an effective international education

experience by relying on a standard two-week faculty foreign exchange activity; and Yule's (1966) emphasis on the importance of faculty participating in joint development projects with foreign schools as a means to promote international education within a college.

Another example of the focus on the creation of programs and the rationale for such a focus is an article by Robinson (1990). The author proposed a "how-to" primer to create an effective faculty international exchange program at the community college. Robinson stated that "...current trends indicated that institutions interested in such programs are well aware of the benefits gained. The most pressing need is how to establish them" (p. 38). Robinson's assumption that the benefits of overseas programs are self-evident appears to be implicit in many of the studies, which focus upon specific procedures to create specific programs involving overseas activities.

Contrary to the majority of the studies supporting the importance of faculty programs in the creation of effective international education, Melaku (1989) found no significant relationships between personal characteristics of individual faculty tasked to facilitate international education in a community college and their perceptions of their work. He defined these individuals as facilitators in the community college who promoted and developed international/intercultural education curricula at the institutions. The personal characteristics Melaku studied included years of experience as a facilitator, total years experience in international education, gender, age, country of origin, and level of education. He did not consider actual experience traveling or living abroad in the analysis of these individuals. But other studies (cited below), suggest that the personal experience of traveling abroad under a faculty exchange, for example, may

have been a significant factor not addressed by Melaku. Additionally, the facilitator roles that Melaku identified included significant numbers of traditional administrative functions such as budget planning, and therefore, facilitator roles were likely understood by all participants irrespective of personal characteristics and the experience of traveling abroad.

To summarize, faculty are recognized as an important component in international education. Faculty international exchanges and study-abroad programs appear in proposals and recommendations to create effective international education efforts in the community college. However, studies involving the travel abroad programs at community colleges indicate a greater emphasis on *creating* such programs than on *determining* the effects of such programs on participants.

Benefits from Faculty Exchanges and Study-Abroad Programs

Robinson's (1990) assertion that the benefits of faculty international exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs are well understood by community colleges appears often in the literature dealing with these programs. For example, Richards (1994) described the importance of faculty participation in a specific international exchange between a community college and a city in Ecuador. He stated that participating faculty "...gain some profound, real-life experience in self-improvement as both teacher and citizen not really possible by remaining on a State-side campus" (p. 10).

The reason that benefits of faculty exchanges and study-abroad programs are assumed at the community college is probably based upon the studies that involved faculty at four-year institutions. The first comprehensive analysis of the impact of faculty overseas experiences on both faculty and their institutions was conducted by

Goodwin and Nacht (1991) and published in Missing the Boat. The Failure to Internationalize American Higher Education. Goodwin and Nacht addressed the issue of the international experience of U.S. faculty by conducting extensive campus visits and interviews at 37 institutions of higher education in four different regions in the United States. Although one community college is included in their sample, Goodwin and Nacht's analysis dealt predominately with four-year institutions. The two authors held discussions with faculty from a broad range of disciplines and with senior administrators.

Based upon the information from the discussions, Goodwin and Nacht analyzed perceptions (they used the term subjective elements) reported by participating faculty and administrators. They grouped perceptions held by faculty and administrators into four categories: personal costs, personal benefits, professional costs, and professional benefits. Personal costs are defined as the negatives or disadvantages perceived from the experiences. Personal costs included concern for health problems in foreign lands, financial loss as a consequence of gaining international experience, and family complications, especially spouse career limitations. Professional costs included possible delay or failure to receive promotions and tenure, other professional detriments such as interruption in grant award patterns, a hiatus in publications, and negative attitudes of colleagues toward participants. They stated that "...evidently a frequent 'punishment' for those returning from overseas is an extra teaching and committee load" (p. 44).

The reported perceived professional benefits included the opportunity to gather and exchange data and ideas; improvement in teaching by using new material,

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anecdotes, and comparative perspectives; an increase sympathy toward students and their problems; possible unanticipated consequences such as fundamental changes in a research path or a shift in career direction; and increased professional prestige especially if national fellowships are used. Reported personal benefits included increased self-understanding often converted into changes in personal and professional style such as an increase in one's level of sensitivity, tolerance, and empathy for the problems of others; strengthened family bonds through family participation in the overseas experience; and the opportunity to serve and share knowledge with those who want to learn. The authors observe that perceived personal benefits are less tangible than perceived professional benefits.

Goodwin and Nacht also identified specific obstacles to international academic experience. Low funding levels and uncertainty about financial opportunities available were frequently cited by participants. Often the customs and regulations of colleges and universities created barriers for faculty overseas experiences. Finally, faculty participants cited the "...prejudice against international travel inherent in American culture" (p. 73). Some participants also cite the American propensity not to take cultural differences seriously, as a national characteristic that they believed inhibited their overseas activities and those of others.

Goodwin and Nacht concluded their study with this assessment:

> ...we conclude that scholarly experience abroad is the best route in the short run by which U.S. higher education can prepare itself to respond positively to the current challenge to internationalize. For students and senior faculty alike, in applied and pure, direct human contact abroad is an immediate way to exchange ideas, arrange collaboration, and generate intellectual products. (p. 117)

Razzano (1994) followed the Goodwin and Nacht methodology and studied both the personal and professional impacts of overseas experience on 52 university faculty at the State University of New York. She gathered data using a semi-structured interviews with professors involved in overseas scholarly activities as consultants, teachers, and researchers. First, she summarized the personal benefits reported by participants as a better understanding of self and society, increase cultural awareness and empathy, increase awareness of global poverty, greater tolerance and respect, foreign language appreciation, and increase interpersonal skills.

Second, in the area of professional impact, she concluded that participants report sustained vitality and productivity. They report that their teaching improved. They report having an impact on colleagues by convincing them to go abroad and by serving as resource persons for colleagues interested in foreign travel. Additionally, participating faculty acquire authentic materials and examples to use in class. By referring to foreign settings, faculty create lessons that become more vivid and less abstract for students. The faculty also become more creative and resourceful in class preparation.

Hazard (1993), to the contrary, found much less favorable perceptions held by faculty when he studied re-entry experiences of returning faculty exchange participants in the Fulbright program involving Australia. Hazard conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with 25 American professors. Participants frequently wished they had more time to spend abroad and most did not look forward to returning to the home institutions. Respondents who experienced stress upon their return described a variety of problems. The problems included feelings of depression, being overburdened by work upon their return, loss of the freedom to pursue research interests, and inadequate institutional

recognition. Hazard concluded that re-entry transition efforts be given the same consideration as orientation efforts by those who administer the Fulbright programs.

Khalatbari-Tonekaboni (1986) conducted an earlier study more narrowly focused on perceptions of university faculty who had participated in international academic activities abroad. He conducted a survey of 290 full-time faculty at five universities in the Washington D.C. area. He developed a questionnaire comprised of 44 items and two open-ended questions. He found that the majority of participating faculty perceive little to no benefits for promotion, tenure, or the ability to conduct administrative tasks, as a result of participation in travel abroad programs. However, he found that participants perceive a wide range of other benefits. Participants reported on the open-ended questions, for example, that they increased their understanding of people, enlarged the understanding of their academic field, improved their teaching, and proved to be helpful colleagues.

The author also found that such personal characteristics as gender, academic rank, and years of teaching were related to reported perceptions. Unfortunately, the study did not fully analyze the data on the rating items in order to permit further specific conclusions. The study concluded with the generality that participants perceive the benefits of the programs according to the degree to which the experience was helpful in meeting their own needs and expectations. Despite the lack of specific conclusions Khalatbari-Tonekaboni demonstrated that data on the perceptions of faculty participating in travel-abroad programs can be collected and that the data have the potential of providing unique information from the participants on the benefits they gained from the experience.

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Turning to community college faculty, Mayes (1981) specifically studied the attitudes toward international education goals, programs, and faculty development activities of faculty and administrators at two community colleges. Although his study did not focus on specific perceived benefits or costs to participants, the study did indicate the influence of the travel abroad experience on attitudes toward international education. He found that faculty and administrators who participated in professional development activities abroad (e.g., faculty exchanges, study abroad, international conferences) show significantly more agreement on goals, programs, and faculty development activities associated with international education than nonparticipants. He concluded that community colleges should provide international staff activities as a means for building more positive support for international education. Other more specific benefits perceived by participants were not studied.

Hatton (1995) proposed five specific benefits to community college faculty to teach abroad. Although Hatton generalized to all teaching-abroad experiences, faculty international exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs may be considered as achieving the same benefits. The benefits to faculty included the use of teaching materials that are reviewed and revised by the faculty member as a result of the overseas activity, a bolstered faculty self-image and improved standards of classroom presentations, a better appreciation and understanding of different cultural norms, the actual experience of being treated as a minority within a society, and the opportunity for the faculty member to generate greater understanding and harmony among different cultural groups.

In summary, studies indicated that community college faculty participants gain benefits from the participation in programs involving travel abroad such as the faculty international exchange and faculty study abroad. However, the studies cited above did not employ a methodology based upon the perceptions of community college faculty actually participating in overseas academic activity. Thus, the full range of benefits to community college faculty and the possible impediments faced by these participants in achieving such benefits may not have yet been identified.

Virginia Community Colleges Programs

A review of the studies specific to Virginia community colleges is also included in the literature review because the author chose to conduct the study within the centralized state system of Virginia. It is recognized that the faculty teaching in a centralized system within one state may have more uniform experiences and expectations than faculty from another centralized system or autonomous colleges system within another state. The author believes, however, that this review of the studies specific to Virginia provides a basis to establish the professional context in which the faculty and colleges contacted for this study function. Subsequent policy recommendations created specifically for the Virginia system may also be evaluated more easily.

International education efforts began among Virginia community colleges in the late 1980s when the importance of international education was emphasized by the governor and the chancellor of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS; Clowdsley, 1988).

A variety of programs and activities evolved to include seminars with a focus on guest experts on international issues (Clowdsley, 1988), an educational exchange to

support a foreign technical school (Priddy and Brogan, 1988), and faculty academic visits to Kenya and the Dominican Republic (Krasnow, 1988). However, a 1988 survey of 14 small, rural community colleges indicated that Virginia community colleges in such settings may have difficulty in promoting international education. In particular, none of the 14 had a student or faculty travel-abroad program at the time (Doromal & King, 1988).

By 1990, the Virginia Council for International Education (VaCIE) was formed to promote and strengthen all aspects of international education among faculty, staff, and students in the state's colleges and universities. In 1995, the VCCS endorsed a professional development exchange for Virginia community college teaching and administrative faculty under a joint program with VaCIE and the Cheshire Education Management Program (CEMP) in the United Kingdom (VCCS, 1995). Concurrent with VaCIE programs, faculty were participating in a wide range of travel abroad programs, to include Fulbright programs (CIES, 1996) and other college recognized programs (NVCC, 1996). However, according to the current president of VaCIE, no formal efforts have been made to determine benefits to the participants of faculty international exchanges and study-abroad programs in the state of Virginia (McCarthy, 1996).

Critique of the Literature

Studies show that international education in the community college is a broad concept, which is widely accepted in the community college today. Important parts of the concept involve faculty participation in faculty international exchanges, study-abroad programs, and other academic-related activities involving travel abroad. Studies indicate that these programs are, indeed, frequently identified as an appropriate part of any

international educational effort in a community college. In particular, the AACC survey confirmed that these programs are reported at many community colleges.

The benefits to participants, however, often appear to be assumed for community college faculty. When the benefits to participants are reported in studies, such studies involve faculty of four-year schools. By extension, there is an assumption that the same benefits (and costs) are perceived by participating community college faculty. However, differences exist between the faculty traveling abroad from community colleges and faculty from four-year schools. These differences, such as levels of formal academic preparation of participants, or the research focus by four-year faculty, may not support an extension of findings from university faculty to community college faculty. Assumed differences between four-year school faculty and community college faculty justify the need to focus directly on community college faculty and the benefits they perceive from participation in faculty exchanges and study-abroad programs. Also no systematic analysis of the benefits to Virginia community college faculty who participate in academic-related activities abroad is available.

In summary, an assessment of the literature indicates a need to study benefits specifically perceived by *community college faculty participants* in faculty international exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs. Based upon identified benefits as well as impediments reported by participants, policy recommendations can be proposed to improve the value of these programs to any community college faculty; however, this study's policy recommendations will focus specifically on the faculty and colleges in the VCCS.

The next chapter presents the methodology used to gather and analyze the benefits of participation in academic-related activities abroad for Virginia community college faculty.

Chapter III

METHODS

This chapter is organized into the following five sections: (1) setting, subjects, and sampling, (2) written questionnaire and interview guide, (3) pilot study, (4) data collection, and (5) data analysis. The first section focuses on the composition of the defined population, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The second section describes the questionnaire instrument and interview guide. The third section discusses the pilot study, which was intended to estimate content validity of the questionnaire, pretest the questionnaire for ease of use by respondents, and pretest the qualitative interview methodology for use later in the study. The fourth section explains the data collection methods data sources. The final section of the chapter describes the data analysis.

Setting, Subjects and Sampling

The study was conducted in the Commonwealth of Virginia from September 1996 through March 1997. The study collected information using a mailed survey and one-on-one interviews of Virginia Community College System (VCCS) full-time faculty who had participated in an academically related activity abroad since 1990, and had lived overseas for a minimum of one week during the activity. The subjects were those full-time faculty (teaching or administrative) identified by senior administrators (traditionally college deans) in each participating VCCS college, or identified by other means as participants in either the Virginia Council for International Education-Cheshire Education

Management Program (VaCIE-CEMP) or one of the Fulbright programs. To initially identify faculty who should be included in the survey group, a letter was sent to every dean for student or academic affairs within the VCCS (Appendix A). The letter outlined the purpose of the study and requested that those full-time faculty meeting the study's criteria be identified by name. Replies were received from 21 of the 23 colleges. The responding colleges either provided names of faculty or stated that no faculty at the college met the criteria. As a further effort to gain the participation of all colleges in the system, the president of Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC), the largest of the system colleges, sent a personal letter to each of his fellow presidents requesting their college's support of the research project (Appendix B). A second follow-up letter was sent to the deans of the two nonresponding colleges; however, no responses were received.

Two additional sources were used to identify faculty for the study. The first source was the VaCIE-CEMP organization. The organization provided an inclusive list of VCCS faculty participants in the organization's exchange programs. This organization was contacted because a preliminary assumption of the type of activity abroad assumed that many community college faculty who traveled abroad did so under one of the VaCIE-CEMP exchanges. The VaCIE-CEMP participant list was double-checked against the faculty already identified by individual colleges. Individuals not previously identified by their colleges but appearing on the VaCIE-CEMP list were added to the sample.

The second source of subjects for the questionnaire sample was the Fulbright programs. The author contacted the national information office Fulbright Exchange

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program and requested a listing of all Virginia community college faculty participating in the Fulbright program. The Fulbright program coordinator for the Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) was also contacted for a listing of faculty Fulbright participants specifically at NVCC. Information from the national information office did not identify any qualifying faculty; however, qualifying faculty were identified by the NVCC Fulbright coordinator.

The use of a variety of sources to identify faculty participants was necessary because there was no single VCCS centralized source of information on faculty activities involving traveling abroad. Preliminary discussions with some college administrators indicated that such faculty activity within a college may have been known to only a few individuals within that college. Participation of the college administrators was essential in identifying those faculty members who went abroad in an academically related capacity compared to those who had gone abroad simply for personal recreation.

The various sources of information were carefully reviewed and a list was developed of 140 individuals who met the selection criteria for the study. Based upon the involvement and expressed support of the senior leadership of nearly all VCCS colleges, this group of 140 most likely represented a large majority of the actual population of VCCS faculty who participated in academic-related activity abroad since 1990. However, the very unofficial nature of many of the trips and the lack of record keeping of this type of faculty activity at many colleges leads to the conclusion that the list of 140 participants probably missed some faculty who participated in such activity. Additionally, there is no complete assurance that all college administrators applied the identification criteria for the study uniformly. Fifteen faculty members who were

initially identified as meeting the study criteria returned the mailed questionnaire stating that they had not participated in travel abroad in the time period specified. Those individuals were therefore eliminated from the study sample. It is likely that other individuals who received the written questionnaire recognized that they did not meet the study criteria and decided to ignore the questionnaire (and follow-up letter) and not respond.

The procedure used to select the participants for the interviews and the qualitative phase of the research was the maximum variation sampling technique outlined by Seidman (1991, pp. 42-43). In the maximum variation sampling technique, individuals are selected who reflect the widest range of characteristics in the larger population under study. Thus, the sample of individuals selected for interview should have many of the characteristics of the questionnaire respondents. The author selected these characteristics of the questionnaire respondent population as a basis for selecting the interview sample: gender, teaching field, years of teaching, highest academic degree, type of activity/program abroad, and initially, the size and geographic location of respondents' colleges.

These seven characteristics provided a reasonable variation and sufficient flexibility for the author to select the actual interview sample. A group of 15 individuals were initially identified from the list of respondents who completed a useable questionnaire. The first 10 individuals agreeing to participate in the interview and available to interview were selected for the interview sample.

The size of the interview sample followed Seidman's criteria for sample size (Seidman 1991, p. 45). The criteria are sufficiency; i.e., sufficient number to reflect the

range of characteristics of participants and "saturation of information"; i.e., interviewer begins to hear the same information reported. A preliminary assessment of the content of the interviews was made after the fifth interview to confirm that additional interviews would continue to provide more new information. It was then decided to continue with the remaining five interviews for a total interview sample of ten.

Initially, the characteristics of size and geographic location of the faculty member's colleges were considered meaningful. However, after the first few interviews (including faculty from colleges in large urban setting and in small rural settings) patterns of responses emerged indicating that the very personal perceptions of the abroad experience appeared unrelated to the size or geographic location of the community college where the interviewee worked. These two characteristics, size and geographic location of the community college, were dropped as a determining factor for selecting the remaining interviewees. The 10 interviewees selected were located in the colleges in the northern urban and eastern rural areas of the state but not from the western or the far southwest portion of the state.

The Questionnaire and Interview Guide

The written questionnaire was developed based on the review of the literature, personal experience of the author, and discussions with colleagues and faculty members at four-year and two-year colleges. Specific items were selected from existing instruments identified in the literature or created intentionally for this study. The questionnaire was designed to gather information about: (1) the demographics of participants, (2) the benefits perceived by the participants in terms of knowledge, positive change in attitude, and positive change in performance, mainly teaching, and (3)

individual motivation to engage in the activity, impediments to successful achievement of the intended goals of the activity, and the judged value of the abroad experience to the faculty of a community college. A copy of the written questionnaire is in Appendix C. The questionnaire was organized into three parts. A description of each part follows.

Part I. Demographics

This section consisted of 14 items numbered 1 through 14 and designed to obtain background information about the faculty member and the academic-related activity abroad. The items were constructed by the author, based upon studies in the literature that identified important characteristics of either the participant or characteristics of the specific activity abroad (e.g., teaching field of the participant and financial aspects of the activity). Additionally, items were constructed to obtain information to allow the author to use common characteristics to describe this group of faculty members. This consideration was important in the questionnaire design because there existed no information about the general characteristics of the faculty who had participated in activities abroad. In addition to gathering demographic data, Part I was also intended to cause the respondents to recall specifics about the activity prior to considering the *meaning* of the experience and making specific judgments on the benefits of the activity.

Items 1 and 9 required respondents to fill in a response; items 2 through 9 and 10 through 14 required the respondents to select one of the responses provided. The items in Part I dealt with the respondent's teaching field, years teaching, academic degree, academic rank, type of academic-related activity in which respondents participated, length of stay abroad, age when participating, personal costs, percentage of costs paid by others, U.S. born, ability to speak another language, adequacy of orientation prior to

activity, living conditions abroad, and willingness to recommend the activity to colleagues.

Part II. Perceived Benefits of Activity Abroad

Part II of the questionnaire consisted of 40 statements numbered 1 through 40. Respondents were asked to indicate the extend of agreement or disagreement to each statement by marking a five-point, Likert-type scale. The five responses on the scale were strongly agree, agree, neutral/no opinion, disagree, and strongly disagree. The intention of this part of the questionnaire was to obtain information on the benefits that participants perceived from the academic-related activities abroad in which they had engaged.

One half of the items selected for this part of the questionnaire (20) were taken from the survey instrument created by Khalatbari-Tonekaboni (1986). Khalatbari-Tonekaboni created his instrument to gather information on the perceptions of full-time university faculty regarding the contribution of international academic or educational activities in foreign countries to the academic and personal development of the faculty participants. Khalatbari-Tonekaboni used a panel of five experts to verify the appropriateness and validity of the items in his questionnaire.

The author carefully reviewed Khalatbari-Tonekaboni items and concluded that the items reflected the broad benefits discussed in the literature and would be appropriate for use with community college faculty. The following questionnaire items were taken from Khalatbari-Tonekaboni's survey instrument: items 1 through 10, 16 through 22, 28, 33, and 34.

The remaining half of the items (20) were constructed by the author after careful review of three written questionnaires identified in the literature dealing with the topic of international education in the American higher education system. The three questionnaires were created and used in the studies by Mayes (1981), and Melaku (1989). The review of these questionnaires allowed the author to identify general benefits that other researchers had considered. The following questionnaire items were constructed by the author: items 11 through 15, 23 through 27, 29 through 32, and 35 through 40.

Perceived Benefits in Gained Knowledge, Attitude Change, and Performance

Based upon the review of the literature, personal experience of the author, and discussions with colleagues and faculty members at four-year and two-year colleges, the author concluded that benefits perceived by participants in academic-related activities appeared to be grouped into three broad categories: benefits associated with an increase in knowledge, benefits associated with a positive change in attitude, and benefits associated with a positive change in performance, mainly teaching. The author carefully reviewed all 40 items in Part II and placed them into one of the three broad categories previously identified. The intention of these groupings was to permit the construction of three scales reflecting benefits to participants in terms of increased knowledge, attitude change, and performance change. There were 15 statements in the knowledge category (items 1 through 15), 15 statements in the attitude category (items 16 through 30), and 10 in the performance category (items 31 through 40). There were only 10 items in the performance category in order to keep the total number of statements to one printed page and thus encourage completion of the entire three-page questionnaire. The author also

recognized that some rating items may be equally appropriate in more than one broad category.

Part III. Motivation, Impediments, and Value to Community College Faculty

Part III of the questionnaire consisted of three opened-statements asking for written responses by the participant. The three statements appeared on a single page and therefore encouraged short written responses up to approximately five handwritten lines. The intention of this section was to present an opportunity for respondents to have the flexibility to express opinions in a semi-structured form using their own words. Additionally, since the previous parts of the questionnaire were based, in part, upon the literature dealing with perceptions of university faculty, the author believed that questions in the open-ended statement format would facilitate the identification of information particularly unique to community college faculty. Responses to these questions would be used as a basis for creating an interview guide for use in the one-on-one interviews.

The first statement (item 1) focused on the participant's personal motivation to take part in the academic-related activity. The second statement (item 2) asked the participant to list any specific impediments to achieving the goals of the activity, which the participant personally experienced. The final statement (item 3) asked for the participant to generalize beyond his or her personal experience and list why two specific programs, faculty exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs, should be encouraged in the community college.

Interview Guide

The interview guide used in each interview comprised 10 open-ended questions. A copy of the guide is in Appendix D. The questions were written to obtain information

derived from the personal reflections of the participant. The general thrust of the guide questions was intended to provide the widest opportunity for the participant to raise topics or issues that appeared particularly relevant to the participant's experience but that had not been addressed by the questionnaire or the interview guide questions. The creation of the interview guide and the actual interviews were considered the second research phase of the study and were developed and conducted after the written questionnaires were collected and reviewed.

The interview questions and actual interviews had these goals:

a. obtain a more complete meaning to tentative conclusions drawn from the questionnaire responses.
b. validate the tentative conclusions drawn for questionnaire response.
c. create another opportunity for a sample of the respondents to reconsider, change, or expand specific responses they expressed in their written questionnaire response choices.
d. identify possibly new conclusions related directly to the statement of the problem of the study (i.e., what benefits are perceived and what policy recommendations would enhance programs and improve education in the VCCS).

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to determine the appropriateness of the questionnaire and to test the methodology for the interview phase of the study. The major goals of the pilot study were to verify the content validity of the questionnaire items, insure clarity of instructions and items in the questionnaire, estimate the time necessary to complete the

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questionnaire, and conduct three in-depth interviews using a preliminary interview guide as a training opportunity for the author in preparation for scheduled interviews later in the study.

Prior to the actual pilot study, the initial draft of the written questionnaire was reviewed by three experienced professional university educators and one professional educational researcher. The individuals reviewed the draft questionnaire for appropriate content and design. Some changes were made in item content to include response options and ensure high overall content validity. Minor adjustments were also made in the questionnaire format. As a result of this expert review process, a second draft of the questionnaire was produced and used in the pilot study.

Montgomery College, Maryland, a large community college in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, was selected for the pilot study. It was assumed that the college would have a significant number of faculty who had traveled abroad. An initial sample of eight faculty members were asked to complete the questionnaire and participate in a 45 minute follow-on interview. This sample was obtained with the cooperation of the international studies coordinator at the college. The coordinator nominated individual faculty members who had participated in an overseas academic experience.

Four faculty (including one administrative faculty member) participated in both completing the questionnaire and sitting for the interview. Other members of the initial sample either could not be personally contacted or did not participate in both aspects of the study. The four fully participating faculty members had a wide range of academic-related overseas activities to include personal travel for academic purposes, a Fulbright

program activities, travel sponsored by an international association, and a college-initiated travel program.

Participants agreed that the items in the questionnaire reflected the potential benefits of their academic-related experiences abroad (items 1 through 40, Part II). Minor suggestions were made to some demographic items to enhance clarity. Participants indicated an average time of 15 minutes was needed to complete the questionnaire. All participants understood the instructions on the questionnaire.

The interviews were conducted immediately after the administration of the written questionnaire. The author used a preliminary interview guide consisting of open-ended questions focusing on the specific academic experience abroad, and the meaning of the experience to the interviewee. The author also used the interviewee's written responses to the written questionnaire as an additional basis for questions during the interview. The interviews in the pilot study confirmed the appropriateness of the methodology and areas of focus for the future interviews (i.e., initial factual description of the actual overseas experience, and the meaning of the experience to the participant). Although the author did not follow Seidman's (1991) three-interview model of a qualitative research methodology, the interviews conducted provided detailed, personal perceptions of participants' experiences.

As a result of the two parts of the pilot study (written questionnaire and interview), the content validity of the questionnaire items was determined to be high. The items were judged meaningful, particularly the categories of benefits in gained knowledge, changes in attitude, and changes in performance, by the sample of community college faculty who had experienced academic-related activities abroad.

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Minor changes were made in the actual questionnaire layout, resulting in the final version of the written questionnaire used in the study.

Data Collection

Each individual on the list of 140 was mailed the two-page written questionnaire, along with a personally addressed letter. A copy of the letter mailed to each individual is in Appendix E. A stamped, self-addressed return envelope was also included in the mailing. The questionnaire was mailed to the individual's college address during the period October 1996 to March 1997. Individuals not replying within the requested 30 days were mailed a second packet identical to the first, except that the cover letter was changed slightly. Four individuals submitted incomplete questionnaires (missed the back of page 1 with the 40 rating items). These questionnaires were returned to the individuals with a request to complete the missed portions. All four questionnaires were returned completed.

For the interview phase, each interviewee was personally contacted by the author and asked to participate in the interview, and a time and place were selected. A follow-up letter confirming the time and place and reiterating the interview purpose was mailed prior to the interview.

The interviews were held during March and April 1997 at each participant's work location. The interview guide in Appendix D was used for each interview. The average length of each interview was 45 minutes. Each interview was tape recorded and transcribed. A copy of the transcribed interview was mailed to each interviewee to review for accuracy and completeness, and to provide the opportunity to expand on responses given during the interview. A stamped, self-addressed return envelope was

included in the mailing. The reviewed and returned transcriptions did not include major changes to content or expansions of initial responses.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

The written questionnaire data were coded, keyed, and verified for computer analysis using the SPSS Base 7.5 for Windows and the SAS. A frequency analysis was conducted on each item in the questionnaire, including the demographic variables. These frequency and percentage distributions were used as a double-check to ensure accuracy of the data entry and to describe the sample with respect to demographic characteristics. The frequency analysis was then used to meet Specific Aim 1, which was to describe the perceived benefits reported by the participants. In addition to frequency distribution and descriptive statistics, a number of inferential statistics were used to examine relationships between the demographic variables stated in Specific Aim 2, years of teaching, the amount of personal funds spent on the activity, length of time abroad in the activity, and the specific type of activity, and the perceived benefits reported from the activity. The General Linear Model (GLM) within the SAS was used to determine relationships among variables.

Specific Aim 1 was achieved using the frequencies, percentages, and means and standard deviations, where appropriate, for the data from the written questionnaire. Specific Aim 2 was tested by first employing reliability analysis to estimate the internal consistency of the proposed three subscales regarding benefits perceived in terms of knowledge, benefits perceived in terms of changes in the participant's attitudes, and benefits perceived in terms of changes in the participant's performance, mainly teaching.

Internal consistency of each scales was determined by the alpha coefficient. The General Linear Model (GLM), an analysis of variance methodology, was used to identify any significant relationships with a $p < .05$ considered significant.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis was based upon the analysis of the 10 interview transcripts. The general methodology for the interviews was similar to in-depth interviews as proposed by Seidman (1991) for qualitative-based research. He states that:

> The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to "evaluate" as the term is normally used. ...At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. (p. 3)

The author read each transcript and grouped similar responses by general themes and patterns of responses. Particular attention was paid to the responses to each of the 10 open-ended questions of the interview guide. The themes were then described in detail and related to conclusions drawn from the analysis of the written questionnaire analysis. The results of the analysis are presented in descriptive form in Chapter IV.

The next chapter presents the results of the various analyses performed on the written questionnaires collected and the face-to-face interviews conducted.

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Chapter IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the study in seven sections. The first section presents the response rates for the written questionnaire. The second section describes the demographic characteristics of respondents. In the third section, the author provides a description of the academic activities cited by participants. The fourth section presents the findings concerning the perceived benefits of the activities abroad. The fifth section lists the results of the three open-ended questionnaire items. The sixth section explains the results of the analysis of the statistical relationships among select variables. The final section lists the themes identified in the one-on-one interviews.

Response Rate

An initial list of 140 individuals was compiled from the three sources previously described: the deans (or their representatives) from 21 of the 23 community colleges in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), Fulbright programs participants reported working in the VCCS, and VaCIE-CEMP exchange program participants. Each of the 140 individuals was sent a written questionnaire with a personally addressed cover letter explaining the purpose of the research and soliciting the faculty member's participation. From the 140 questionnaire packets mailed, 106 recipients replied. Based upon the initial analysis of the 106 returned questionnaire, 19 individuals were dropped from the study for the following reasons: 15 did not meet the study criteria; 2 were no longer employed within the VCCS and unavailable to complete the questionnaire; and 2

while replying chose not to participate. Thus, the total number of individuals who replied to the mailing was 106, but 19 of these individuals were excluded so that the total number of individuals who completed the questionnaires and were included in the analysis was 87. The remaining 34 individuals of the initial mailing of 140 did not respond even after a second mailing to each individual.

The sample response rate was calculated by dividing the number of completed questionnaires received by the total adjusted study sample and multiplying by 100. The sample response rate was 71.9%. Table 1 shows the factors used in calculating the response rate.

Table 1

Response Rate Among a Sample of VCCS Faculty

	N	%
Total Individuals Mailed Questionnaire	140	100%
Completed Questionnaires Received	87	62.1%
Individuals Dropped from Study	19	13.6%
No longer employed/not available	2	1.4%
Did not meet study criteria	15	10.7%
Replied, chose not to participate	2	1.4%
Individuals Not Responding	34	24.3%
Study Sample = Total Mailed - Dropped	140 - 19 = 121	
Sample Response Rate = Completed/Sample	87 / 121 = 71.9%	

Note. Percentage values are rounded and therefore subtotals may differ.

Demographic Characteristics of VCCS Participants

The general demographic characteristics of the participants and the characteristics of the activity abroad were determined by a frequency analysis of the demographic items in Part 1 of the written questionnaire and data gathered in creating the initial mailing list of faculty considered for the study.

Table 2 describes the demographic characteristics for the 87 participants of the study sample. The frequencies of responses, in percentages, for the specific demographic items in the questionnaire are shown in Table 2. Also included are the distributions by gender and size of the college where the participant was employed. Name, gender, and college information were not requested in the written questionnaire; however, it was obtained from the address lists compiled for the questionnaire mailing.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics Among a Sample of VCCS Faculty Reporting Participating in Academic Activities Abroad (N=87)

Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Male	49	56.3
Female	38	43.7
Size of VCCS College Where Working		
Category I - less than 1,500	13	14.9
Category II - 1,500-2,499	10	11.5
Category III - 2,500-4,999	20	23.0
Category IV - 5,000-9,999	18	20.7
Category V - 10,000 or more	26	29.9
Born Outside the U.S.		
Yes	8	9.2
No	79	90.8

Table 2 (cont'd)

Characteristics	n	%
Speak Another Language		
Yes	34	39.1
No	53	60.9
Teaching/Administrative Field		
Humanities	33	39.3
Science	18	20.7
Technical fields	11	12.6
Administrator/counselor	10	11.5
Health fields	6	6.9
Business	6	6.9
Criminal justice	3	3.4
Years Teaching/Administration[a]		
0-5	1	1.2
6-10	6	7.1
11-15	12	14.1
16-20	12	14.1
More than 20	54	63.5
Academic Degree		
Associate	0	0
Bachelor's	3	3.4
Master's	52	59.8
Doctorate	30	34.5
Other	2	2.3
Academic Rank/Administrative Title[b]		
Instructor	3	3.6
Assistant Professor	14	16.1
Associate Professor	29	33.3
Full Professor	30	34.5
Division Chair	2	2.3
Director/Coordinator	2	2.3
Dean/Provost	3	3.4

[a] Two individuals did not respond to this item.
[b] Four individuals did not respond to this item.

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Among the 87 faculty members a greater number of men than women (56.3% versus 43.7%) completed the questionnaire. Participants came from all five sizes categories of colleges in the VCCS (see Table 2 for the number of students in each of the five size categories) with nearly one-third from the one college comprising the largest size college category (Northern Virginia Community College at 29.9%). The vast majority of participants were born in America (90.8%) and a majority of participants did not speak another language (60.9%).

The questionnaire item dealing with the participant's teaching or administrative field was a write-in item. Responses were grouped by like-responses and resulted in the seven categories shown in Table 2. The complete list of reported teaching fields and administrative areas used to created the categories is in Appendix E. More than one-third (39.3%) of the reported teaching fields was grouped in the category of humanities, including fields such has English, history, and literature. The next most frequently reported teaching fields were in the category of science (20.7%) and included such fields as mathematics, biology, and psychology.

Ten participants reported administrative or student service primary responsibilities rather than teaching fields. These ten individuals represented 11.5% of the sample and included areas such as counselors, adult education specialists and educational administrators.

The remaining teaching fields covered a broad range of academic specialties and accounted for the remaining 28.8% of the teaching fields/administrative areas reported by

the participants. These other teaching specialty categories were technical (12.6%), health (6.9%), business (6.9%), and criminal justice (3.4%).

Considering professional experience, the clear majority of participants in the sample reported having taught or participated in nonteaching areas for more than 20 years (63.3%). At the same time, only seven participants, representing 8.3% of all participants, placed themselves in the two fewest years (0-5 and 6-10) response categories. The remaining participants reported 11-15 years (14.1%) or 16-20 years (14.1%) of experience. These data indicate that nearly all participants were experienced faculty with many years of teaching. Only seven faculty had ten years of experience or less.

The majority of participants held a master's degree (59.8%). However, 34.5% reported they held a doctorate degree. No participant reported only an associate degree.

Considering the large number of years of teaching experience or administrative experience reported by participants, it is not unexpected that about two-thirds of the participants reported holding the rank of full professor (34.5%) or associate professor (33.3%). Only 8.0% of participants indicated that they worked in administrative positions (division chair--2.3%, director/coordinator--2.3%, and dean/provost-- 3.4%).

The reported age of participants at the time of the overseas academic activity is consistent with the data indicating an experienced, senior group of faculty. The majority of the participants were between 41-50 years (53.6%) at the time of the activity abroad with a quarter of the participants in the two oldest response categories (51-60 years--23.8% and more than 60 years--3.6%). Again there were few relatively young faculty participants (under 30 years--3.6%).

The above demographic information concerning the VCCS faculty participants in academic activities abroad since 1990 indicates that the majority are experienced teachers, senior in terms of reported academic rank, and either at or approaching middle age.

Description of Academic Activities Abroad

Tables 3 and 4 show the frequency of responses to the questionnaire items dealing with the description of the academic activities abroad.

Based upon the review of the literature and analysis of the pilot study, the author selected seven types of academic activities as the response options on the questionnaire, plus one additional response for "other" activities. Participants could choose more than one response category to reflect the different activities in which they may have participated. There were 130 responses to the questionnaire item.

Table 3 shows the frequencies of responses by type of academic activities abroad for the participants in the sample. The table also shows that 61 participants (70.1%) reported one activity abroad while 14 (16.1%) reported two activities and 12 (13.8%) reported more than two activities. Thus, one-third of all participants in the sample reported that they participated in overseas activities at least twice.

The most frequently cited activity abroad (30.8% of all responses) was the response category of faculty/administrative exchange. The second most frequent activity was the category of educational tour (20.0%). These two activities account for one-half of all activities reported. It should be noted that the response categories consisted of short descriptive phrases without extensive definitions of the activities. Although the

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Table 3

Types of International Educational Activities Abroad as Reported by a Sample of Faculty in the VCCS

Types of Activities	Frequency	%
Faculty/administrative exchange	40	30.8
Educational tour	26	20.0
Teaching (excluding exchanges)	15	11.5
International study-abroad program	11	8.5
Professional consultation	11	8.5
Research abroad	9	6.9
Fellowship for advanced study abroad	4	3.1
Other	14	10.8
Total number of activities reported	130	100.1%
Individuals reporting 1 activity	61	70.1
Individuals reporting 2 activities	14	16.1
Individuals reporting more than 2 activities	12	13.8
Total number of individuals completing questionnaires	87	100%

Note. Percentage values are rounded and therefore subtotals may differ.

author believes that each category was easily understood and mutually exclusive, some respondents may have applied their own interpretation of the various activity categories and thus introduced some distortion into the frequencies of activities reported.

The other 50% of the activities reported included a wide range of academic activities. The two least frequently cited categories of activities involved either a focus on research or a fellowship for advanced study. The two activities (research and fellowships for advanced study) are probably typical academic activities for four-year

college faculty rather than community college faculty who focus primarily on classroom teaching.

The relatively large number of participants citing the category of faculty/administrative exchanges prompted the author to review the number of VaCIE-CEMP participants who responded to the questionnaire. The VaCIE-CEMP program is a unique faculty/administrator two-week exchange program, which is in its second full year in the VCCS. The review of the list of VaCIE-CEMP participants indicated that there were 20 study sample respondents who were also identified as having participated in the VaCIE-CEMP program. Thus, the author concluded that the large number of VaCIE-CEMP participants influenced the high frequency for the response category of faculty/administrative exchange and probably to a lesser degree the frequencies for the response category of length of stay.

Table 4 shows the results for the questionnaire items intended to describe the characteristics of the activities abroad. The most frequently cited length of stay abroad was two to three weeks (54.1%). The second most frequent length abroad was one to six months (24.7%). Extensive length of stays overseas were only reported by 9.4% of the respondents (7-12 months--3.5% and more than 12 months--5.9%). Short stays (one week) were only reported by 11.8% of the respondents. Although the most frequently reported length of stay corresponds to the VaCIE-CEMP two-week program, it may also correspond to an ideal period of time for teaching faculty who teach part of the summer.

Concerning the financial aspects of the activity abroad, the author initially assumed that financial considerations were an important limitation on the willingness to

Table 4

Characteristics of the Academic Activities Abroad for a Sample of VCCS Faculty (N=87)

Characteristics	n	%
Length of Stay Abroad During Activity		
One week	10	11.8
2-3 weeks	46	54.1
1-6 months	21	24.7
7-12 months	3	3.5
more than 12 months	5	5.9
Total individuals completing item	85	
Age When Participating		
Under 30	3	3.6
30-40	13	15.5
41-50	45	53.6
51-60	20	23.8
over 60	3	3.6
Total individuals completing item	84	
Personal Financial Cost to Participate		
Under $500	23	27.4
$501-1,500	20	23.8
$1,501-2,500	13	15.5
$2,501-3,500	9	10.7
more than $3,500	6	7.1
No personal cost	13	15.5
Total individuals completing item	84	
% of Activity Cost Paid by Others		
0	22	27.2
1-25%	3	3.7
26-50%	12	14.8
51-75%	8	9.8
76-99%	27	33.3
100%	9	11.1
Total individuals completing item	81	

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Table 4 (cont'd)

Characteristics	n	%
Adequate Orientation Prior to Arrival		
Yes	74	87.1
No	12	12.9
Total individuals completing item	86	
Living Conditions Abroad		
Excellent	38	44.7
Satisfactory	46	54.1
Unsatisfactory	1	1.2
Total individuals completing item	85	
Recommend Participation to a Colleague		
Yes	83	100
No	0	
Total individuals completing item	83	

participate in overseas activity based upon the recognized limited salaries for community college faculty. However, 42.9% of respondents in the sample reported that they either experienced no personal costs (15.5%) or costs under $500 (27.4%). The next most frequently reported personal cost response category was the range $501-1,500 (23.8%). Personal financial costs over $2,501 were still reported by 17.8% of the participants ($2,501-3,500--10.7% and over $3500--7.1%).

To analyze the percentage of the overseas activities costs paid by others, the author grouped the write-in responses to this item on the questionnaire into six categories. As one would expect if participants reported spending little of their own funds, then others must have paid a large part of the financial costs. Thus, 11.1% of the participants reported that 100% of the cost was paid by others, while 33.3% of all write-in responses

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fell into the category range of 76%-99% paid by others. Interestingly, 27.2% of the participants indicated that 0% of the activity costs were paid by others. Since participants reported spending relatively small amounts of their own funds and yet others did not contribute to the overall costs, one must conclude that many faculty participants demonstrated careful financial planning and resourcefulness in carrying out the overseas experience.

Besides the financial considerations, the literature indicated that the adequacy of an orientation to an individual was important to the total experience of the overseas activity. The participants in the study, by a very large majority, reported that the orientation prior to arrival overseas was adequate (yes--87.1% and no--12.9%). At the same time, 98.8% of the participants described the living conditions abroad as satisfactory (54.1%) or excellent (44.7%).

The last item of Part I of the questionnaire asked the participants if they would recommend to a colleague the activity in which they engaged. Eight-three respondents answered the item and four left it blank. There were 100% "yes" responses by the 83 participants completing the item. The researcher speculates that the participants who left the item blank were ambivalent about the experience or may have been reluctant to choose the "no" response because of the complexity of the entire overseas experience. One respondent added notes to the margin of the questionnaire indicating such thinking. Despite the above caveat, it is clear that participants valued the overseas experience so highly that they were virtually unanimous in recommending the activity to colleagues.

Benefits Perceived By Participants

The participants in the sample were asked to express their perceptions of the benefits that derived from the academic activity abroad by completing the 40 items of Part II of the written questionnaire. Each item consisted of a statement which had a five-point Likert-like response scale. Table 5 shows the frequencies of responses for each item both by actual number of participants and by percentage. The means and standard deviations for each item are shown in Appendix F.

A general view of the response patterns shows that there was very strong agreement on a number of benefits (i.e., skewed response pattern toward the higher end of the scale); there was less agreement on a few of the benefits (i.e., some spread of responses over the entire scale); and virtually no strong disagreement with any of the benefits expressed by the 40 items (i.e., only a few responses at the lowest end of the scale).

The single item that received strong disagreement ratings by the participants was item 25. This item was also the only item negatively phrased ("The academic program(s) in which I participated abroad: Was not worth the financial expenditure."). The strong disagreement with the statement that the academic activity was not worth the financial effort should be positively interpreted to be consistent with the rating direction of the other 39 items. In other words, participants felt strongly that the academic activity *was* worth the financial effort. Thus, for the purposes of statistical analyses, item 25 was recoded to compensate for the negative inconsistent phrasing of the item and to avoid distortion of the analyses.

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Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Benefits Reported by VCCS Faculty Participating in Academic-Related Activities Abroad (N=87)

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral, No Opinion n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Total N
The academic program(s) in which I participated abroad:						
1. Increased my awareness of teaching methods used in international academic systems.	**39 (44.8)**	27 (31.0)	15 (17.2)	3 (3.4)	3 (3.4)	87
2. Provided observations to be used in my teaching.	**43 (49.4)**	30 (34.5)	10 (11.5)	3 (3.4)	1 (1.1)	87
3. Enhanced my ability in comparing cultures. [a]	**68 (78.2)**	18 (20.7)	1 (1.1)	0	0	86
4. Increased my knowledge about educational and academic systems of foreign countries.	**54 (62.1)**	26 (29.9)	4 (4.6)	2 (2.3)	1 (1.1)	87
5. Increased my international understanding.	**64 (73.6)**	21 (24.1)	2 (2.3)	0	0	87
6. Helped me learn how other people and nations solve problems.	25 (28.7)	**40 (46.0)**	18 (20.7)	2 (2.3)	2 (2.3)	87
7. Gave me more insight about other way of living.	**53 (60.0)**	29 (33.3)	5 (5.7)	0	0	87
8. Motivated learning about other people and nations.	**50 (57.5)**	30 (34.5)	7 (8.0)	0	0	87
9. Developed my understanding of other cultures.	**48 (55.2)**	36 (41.4)	2 (2.3)	1 (1.1)	0	87
10. Increased my awareness of customs of the host country.	**64 (73.6)**	22 (25.3)	1 (1.1)	0	0	87
11. Increased my knowledge of my teaching/administrative field.	24 (27.6)	**27 (31.0)**	23 (26.4)	8 (9.2)	5 (5.7)	87
12. Improved my foreign language proficiency.[a]	10 (11.5)	20 (23.0)	**28 (32.2)**	21 (24.1)	7 (8.0)	86
13. Increased my factual knowledge of the geography, history, and economy of the host country.	**52 (59.8)**	32 (36.8)	3 (3.4)	0	0	87

Table 5 (cont'd)

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral, No Opinion n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Total
14. Gave me an interest in foreign politics, international relations, and world affairs.	31 (35.6)	**34 (39.1)**	19 (21.8)	3 (3.4)	0	87
15. Allowed me to collect materials for teaching.	**33 (37.9)**	26 (29.9)	20 (23.0)	5 (5.7)	3 (3.4)	87
16. Increased my adaptability to new cultural environments.	**39 (44.8)**	35 (40.2)	11 (12.6)	2 (2.3)	0	87
17. Increased my adaptability to my own environment.	24 (27.6)	23 (26.4)	**28 (32.2)**	11 (12.6)	1 (1.1)	87
18. Developed my problem solving ability.	17 (19.5)	29 (33.3)	**33 (37.9)**	7 (8.0)	1 (1.1)	87
19. Increased my understanding of my international students.	23 (26.4)	**43 (49.4)**	17 (19.5)	4 (4.6)	0	87
20. Motivated me to look for other similar international opportunities for the future.	**50 (57.5)**	29 (33.3)	5 (5.7)	3 (3.4)	0	87
21. Made adaptability to other cultures easier for me.[a]	25 (28.7)	**35 (40.2)**	22 (25.3)	4 (4.6)	0	86
22. Helped me to find that other cultural differences are not major barriers for scholarly activity.	32 (36.8)	37 (42.5)	14 (16.1)	4 (4.6)	0	87
23. Provided a good experience personally.	**71 (81.6)**	14 (16.1)	0	2 (2.3)	0	87
24. Provided a good experience professionally.	**60 (69.0)**	23 (26.4)	3 (3.4)	1 (1.1)	0	87
25. Was not worth the financial effort.[a]	3 (3.4)	0	4 (4.6)	13 (14.9)	**66 (75.9)**	86
26. Made me a strong supporter for internationalizing education in the community college.	**48 (55.2)**	30 (34.5)	7 (8.0)	2 (2.3)	0	87
27. Increased my enthusiasm for teaching.	**31 (35.6)**	**31 (35.6)**	22 (25.3)	3 (3.4)	0	87
28. Expanded my perceptions of research areas in my field.	24 (27.6)	20 (23.0)	**34 (39.1)**	7 (8.0)	2 (2.3)	87
29. Instilled new values and attitudes in me as a person and as an American.	24 (27.6)	**41(47.1)**	17 (19.5)	5 (5.7)	0	87

Table 5 (cont'd)

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral, No Opinion n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Total
30. Confirmed to me that the American educational system is the best.	15 (17.2)	14 (16.1)	**33 (37.9)**	23 (26.4)	2 (2.3)	87
31. Allowed me to make specific changes in the written material used in the classroom.	14 (16.1)	24 (27.6)	**34 (39.1)**	14 (16.1)	1 (1.1)	87
32. Provided international examples to use in my teaching.	**39 (44.8)**	43 (39.1)	11 (12.6)	3 (3.4)	0	87
33. Motivated me to participate in international activities on my campus.	24 (27.6)	**33 (37.9)**	24 (27.6)	6 (6.9)	0	87
34. Provided the opportunity for me to become a resource person for cooperative programs between my college and foreign educational organizations.	15 (17.2)	**31 (35.6)**	29 (33.3)	11 (12.6)	1 (1.1)	87
35. Provided the opportunity for me to become a resource person for my fellow faculty/administrators.	20 (23.0)	**47 (54.0)**	13 (14.9)	6 (6.9)	1 (1.1)	87
36. Motivated me to take actions to introduce global perspectives into my classes.	30 (34.5)	**36 (41.4)**	20 (23.0)	1 (1.1)	0	87
37. Improved my ability to make friends and meet strangers.	19 (21.8)	26 (29.9)	**31 (35.6)**	11 (12.6)	0	87
38. Encouraged me to write articles for professional publications.	11 (12.6)	21 (24.1)	**30 (34.5)**	22 (25.3)	3 (3.4)	87
39. Motivated me to use the Internet more.	11 (12.6)	22 (25.3)	**29 (33.3)**	21 (24.1)	4 (4.6)	87
40. Gave me the opportunity to develop friendships with my colleagues overseas.	**41 (47.1)**	32 (36.8)	10 (11.5)	4 (4.6)	0	87

[a] For each of these items, one individual did not respond to the specific item.

In view of the generally high positive agreement on many of the benefits perceived by the participants, the author first identified those benefits on which at least 70% of the participants chose the "strongly agree" response. These five benefits, in order of strongest percentage agreement, are:

provided a good experience personally (81.6%)

enhanced my ability in comparing cultures (78.2%)

was worth the financial effort (75.9%)

increased my international understanding (73.6%)

increased my awareness of customs of the host country (73.6%)

These benefits may be characterized as generalized benefits and express the overall positive experience to the individual participants.

The author next identified those benefits on which at least 90% of the participants indicated "agree" or "strongly agree." The high 90% cut-off was selected in order to take a conservative approach in view of the generally high positive agreement on many of the items. The 11 benefits, in order of largest agreement, are the following:

my ability in comparing cultures (98.9%)

increased my international understanding (97.7%)

provided a good experience personally (97.7%)

developed my understanding of other cultures (96.6%)

increased my factual knowledge of the geography, history, and economics of the host country (96.6%)

provided a good experience professionally (95.4%)

increased my awareness of customs of the host country (98.9%)

enhanced gave me more insight about other ways of living (93.3%)

increased my knowledge about the educational and academic systems of foreign countries (92.0%)

motivated learning about other people and nations (92.0%)

was worth the financial effort (90.8%)

These items again reflect the high level of generalized benefits, plus the benefits gained in specifics about other cultures and other countries.

Despite the large agreement on the above items, participants did indicate disagreement on a few of the proposed benefits items. Because there was so little disagreement with the proposed benefits in general, the author combined the two response categories of "disagree" and "strongly disagree" for each item in order to identify where the greatest disagreement was expressed by participants. Five benefit items showed the highest percentage of disagreement. These items, in order of highest percentage of disagreement, are the following:

improved my foreign language proficiency (32.1%)

confirmed to me that the American education system is the best (28.7%)

encouraged me to write articles for professional publications (28.7%)

motivated me to use the Internet more (28.7%)

allowed me to make specific changes in the written material used in the classroom (17.2%)

The benefits reflected in the items receiving the largest number of disagree responses are far more specific than the benefits receiving high agreement. The one exception is the item dealing with the American education system. This item contains an assumption that the American education is the best. Participants may have simply rejected the assumption and marked the disagree end of the scale for this item to express their rejection of the assumption. This reasoning was expressed later in the interviews.

Finally, despite the very high agreement on a number of benefits and little disagreement on others, a surprising number of participants chose the response "neutral, no opinion" for some items. This response pattern was judged significant by the author because the items initially selected for the benefits section of the questionnaire reflected those benefits suggested by the literature and confirmed by the pretest phase of the study. If the participants did not believe they gained the benefits reflected in the item, then a logical participant response should be "disagree" or "strongly disagree." Instead, the initial frequency analysis shows that participants used the "neutral, no opinion" response.

In order to further analyze the neutral responses pattern, the author studied the items with the highest frequency of "neutral, no opinion." The author selected a cut-off of at least 30% of the respondents indicating "neutral, no opinions" as the basis to identify benefits which were judged neutral. The benefits, in order of largest percentage of "neutral, no opinion," are the following:

improved my foreign language proficiency (32.2%)

allowed me to make specific changes in the written materials

used in the classroom (39.1%)

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expanded my perceptions of research areas in my field (39.1%)

confirmed to me that the American educational system is the best (37.9%)

developed my problem-solving ability (37.9%)

improved my ability to make friends and meet strangers (35.6%)

encouraged me to write articles for professional publications (34.5%)

motivated me to use the Internet more (33.3%)

gave me the opportunity to develop friendships with my colleagues overseas (33.3%)

provided the opportunity for me to become a resource person for cooperative programs between my college and foreign educational organizations (33.3%)

adaptability to my own environment (32.2%)

A review of the percentages of participants choosing the "neutral, no opinion" for the above benefits shows that approximately one-third of the participants selected the response option. The five benefits with the largest percentages of disagreement by participants are also included in the above group. It would appear that participants either disagreed or selected the neutral response option for a number of benefits suggested by the literature.

Further analysis of the 11 items with a high percentage of "neutral, no opinion" responses indicates that many of the benefits suggested by the items dealt with specific performance areas such as problem solving, making friends, changing written materials used in the classroom, and being a resource person for others. These more specific

benefits are in contrast to the more general benefits with which a large majority of participants agreed. One possible implication of the high percentage of "neutral, no opinion" responses is that participants did not perceive as many benefits, which were very specific in nature compared to the benefits that had broader implications. In other words, participants perceived gaining broad benefits, characterized by descriptive phrases such as understanding of, exposure to, general comprehension of, sensitivity to, and not specific benefits from the activity. Another implication, and simpler implication, is that some items in the questionnaire reflect a particular type of benefit (involving specific skills or behavior), which the sample of faculty in this study did not feel applied to their experiences.

To further study the implications, the items receiving a large percentage of neutral responses were divided into two specific groups. The first group of items dealt with benefits in common skills such as making friends or problem-solving abilities. The second group of items dealt with benefits in specific activities involving classroom performance, course content, and professional writing.

The author speculated that participants did not find the first group of benefits relevant to their experience. The speculation was based on the demographic data, which shows that most of the individuals in the sample are mature, successful professionals who likely have well-developed interpersonal and problem-solving skills, and, thus, these individuals do not perceive benefits in these areas. Additionally, as experienced, successful classroom teachers the study participants were likely to be extroverts in social situations. The same individuals were also likely to be critical thinkers and experienced

problem solvers. The author believed that the interview phase of the study would provide the opportunity to confirm this speculation.

However, for the second group of benefits dealing with professional skills, the author speculated that the participants chose to respond with a "neutral, no opinion" response rather than express disagreement with the proposed benefits that involved actual performance changes on their part. The significance of the neutral responses to these benefits is that participants may have perceived little benefits in these professional areas because they did not change their professional performance as a result of their overseas experience. The author's speculation was based upon the demographic data, which shows that participants have taught for a large number of years. Participants may have felt comfortable and confident in their teaching styles and satisfied with their well-established courses so that they do not perceive specific benefits to themselves in the areas such as making specific changes to written materials used in the classroom or expanding perceptions of research in specific teaching areas. The author confirmed the speculations during the follow-on interview phase of the study reported later in the chapter.

Motivation, Impediments, and Value to the Community College

The last section of the written questionnaire consisted of three open-ended items in question or statement format. The author grouped like responses to each item and created categories from these groups. The categories of responses and frequencies of responses are shown in Tables 6, 7, and 8. It should be noted that a participant may have given more than one response to each item.

Table 6 shows the frequencies for the response categories for the personal motivation of participants who engaged in academic activities abroad. The key words and phases taken from the questionnaires and used to create the groupings are shown in Appendix H.

Table 6

Frequencies and Percentages of Personal Motivation Responses from VCCS Faculty Participating in Academic Activities Abroad (N=87)

Response Category	Frequency	%
Acquire professional knowledge/research	39	31.4
Interest in other cultures	29	23.4
Personal satisfaction/curiosity	20	16.1
Enjoy travel	17	13.7
Opportunity came up	9	7.2
Costs low	6	4.8
Timing good	4	3.2
Total responses	124	99.8%

Note. Total percentage value reflects rounding in other percentage values.

The most frequently given personal motivation response by participants is best described as the desire to acquire professional knowledge and/or to conduct research. Responses in this category represented 31.4% of all responses given by participants. Typical responses illustrating this grouping of responses included phrases such as "... obtain specific information to share with my students," "...see how my discipline was taught," "...to do research," and "...curiosity about the British education system." The next most frequently listed motivation involved a general interest in other cultures with

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such responses as "...being immersed in a new culture," "...explore new cultures," "...I love experiencing other cultures," and "...to view foreign cultures firsthand." This category of motivation accounted for nearly one-fourth of all responses given (23.4%).

The next two categories of personal motivation involved personal satisfaction and/or general curiosity (16.1% of all responses) and simply the enjoyment of travel (13.% of all responses). The remaining three groupings of motivation had low frequencies and were the opportunity came up (7.2%), costs low (4.8%), and timing good (3.2%).

In the second open-end item, the author requested the participants to list any impediments they faced to successfully participate in academic-related activities abroad. Table 7 shows the categories of responses and the frequencies for each categories. The key words and phases taken from the questionnaires and used to create the groupings are shown in Appendix I.

The most frequently given response by participants was that there are no impediments to successful participation in the activities abroad (43.3% of all responses). This high frequency appears consistent with the high positive perceptions of benefits shown for Part II of the questionnaire and the unanimity in recommending the activity to colleagues.

The next two response categories included impediments, which fell into these groupings: lack of institutional support/government support (17.8% of all responses) and financial considerations (13.3%). Typical responses under the lack of institutional support included phrases such as "...Chair and Dean didn't support the program," "...my

Table 7

Frequencies and Percentages of Impediments to Successful Participation in Academic-Related Activities Abroad Reported by VCCS Faculty (N=87)

Response Category	Frequency	%
None	39	43.3
Lack of institutional/government support (excluding financial considerations)	16	17.8
Financial considerations	11	13.3
Length of stay too short	6	6.7
Activity differed from stated purpose	5	5.6
Medical problems	3	3.3
Poor timing of visit	3	3.3
Limited foreign language ability	3	3.3
Logistical problems in academic area	2	2.2
Hostile working/social environment	2	2.2
Total responses	90	100.1%

Note. Total percentage value reflects rounding in other percentage values.

college's lack of interest," "...idiots in the business office," and "...lack of support from administration." Some examples of responses under the category of financial considerations included "...lack of money," "...personal money I needed," and "...no financial support."

The remaining categories of responses indicate a wide range of impediments to a successful academic-related activity abroad. However, the low frequency of responses for these categories also implies that these impediments applied to few participants.

The final open-ended item asked the participant to provide generalized reasons why community college faculty should be encouraged to participate in academic

activities involving travel abroad. Table 8 shows the categories and frequencies of responses. The key words or phases taken from the questionnaires and used to create the groupings are shown in Appendix J.

Table 8

Frequencies and Percentages of Reasons Why Community College Faculty Should Be Encouraged to Participate in Academic Activities Abroad (N=87)

Response Category	Frequency	%
Broaden faculty global perspective	46	40.4
Improve professional performance as teacher	16	14.0
Broaden student global perspective	13	11.4
Personal growth/change	10	8.8
Understand another education system	9	7.9
Obtain professional knowledge (not directly related to teaching performance)	8	7.0
Confirm American values	5	4.3
Appreciate own education system	4	3.5
No-stay with local focus/not worth effort	2	1.8
Create international training opportunities for the college	1	1.0
Total responses	114	100.1%

Note. Total percentage value reflects rounding in other percentage values.

Forty percent of the responses indicate that academic-related activities broadened faculty global perspectives. Some examples of participants' responses in this category include "...expose faculty to different cultures," "...develop sense of global community," "...faculty have not traveled....limited perspectives," and "...cannot afford to be insular in our world."

The next most frequent response category was that the overseas activity improved professional performance of teachers (14.0%). The third most frequent response category was that the activity abroad broadened student global perspectives (11.4%). This third most frequent response group differed from the most frequent response, broadened faculty global perspective, in that the participants clearly focused on students in their response.

The other less frequent reasons given by participants range from benefits of personal growth for community college faculty to appreciating one's own education system.

Statistical Relationships Between Variables

Specific Aim 2 of the study was to examine relationships between the independent variables of the participants' years of teaching (item 2, Part 1), the amount of personal funds spent on the activity (item 8, Part 1), length of time abroad in the activity (item 6, Part 1), and the specific type of activity (item 5, Part 1) and the dependent variable of the perceived benefits reported from the activity. The dependent variable was defined as the sum of rating scores for the perceived benefits reflected in each of three scales: benefits of increased knowledge (scale K; items 1 through 15, Part 2); benefits of change in attitude (scale A; items 16 through 30, Part 2); and benefits in change of performance (scale P; items 31 through 40, Part 2). A total perceived benefit scale was also constructed by considering the sum of rating scores for all 40 items (scale T; items 1 through 40, Part 2).

In order to obtain a measure of the internal consistency of the three scales of benefits (i.e., gain in knowledge, positive change of attitude, and positive change in performance), the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha internal consistency reliability measure was determined for each of the three scales. The SPSS statistical software was used to determine the reliability measure. Table 9 shows the Alpha values for each of the scales. An Alpha value of 0.60 or higher was used to confirm that the three scales were internally consistent. The relatively high Alpha values showed that the three scales possessed acceptable reliability and justified further statistical analyses.

Table 9

Reliability Analysis of Benefit Scales for Gained Knowledge, Positive Change in Attitude, and Positive Change in Performance (N=87)

Summary of Scales	Questionnaire Items	Estimate of Internal Consistency (Alpha)
Benefits in Gained Knowledge	15 items (items 1 to 15)	0.808 (n=86)[a]
Benefits in Positive Change in Attitude	15 items (items 16 to 29)	0.845 (n=85)[b]
Benefits in Positive Change in Performance	10 items (items 30 to 40)	0.784 (n=87)

[a] One individual did not respond to one of the 15 items.
[b] Two individuals did not respond to one of the 15 items.

In order to continue the analysis, benefit scale scores for each of the three benefit scales, plus a total benefits score, was determined for each of the 87 participants. A numerical value was computed for each scale for each participant by combining the individual's ratings over those questionnaire items comprising the particular scale.

The General Linear Model (GLM) procedure, a method of analysis of variance in the SAS statistic software package, was used to test for a statistically significant relationship between each of the four independent demographic variables and the scores on each of the dependent benefit scales. Twelve specific null hypotheses were proposed. The null hypotheses are shown in Table 10. A significance level of .05 was selected for the probability (p) values in the tests.

Table 10

Null Hypotheses for Four Demographic Variables and Three Benefits Scales

Number	Hypothesis
1	Variable *years of teaching* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale K reflecting *benefits of increased knowledge.*
2	Variable *years of teaching* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale A reflecting *benefits in attitude change.*
3	Variable *years of teaching* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale P reflecting *benefits in change of performance.*
4	Variable *personal funds spent* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale K reflecting *benefits of increased knowledge.*
5	Variable *personal funds spent* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale A reflecting *benefits in attitude change.*
6	Variable *personal funds spent* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale P reflecting *benefits in change of performance.*
7	Variable *length of time abroad* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale K reflecting *benefits of increased knowledge.*
8	Variable *length of time abroad* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale A reflecting *benefits in attitude change.*

Table 10 (cont'd)

Number	Hypothesis
9	Variable *length of time abroad* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale P reflecting *benefits in change of performance*.
10	Variable *type of activity abroad* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale K reflecting *benefits of increased knowledge*.
11	Variable *type of activity abroad* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale A reflecting *benefits in attitude change*.
12	Variable *type of activity abroad* does not have any effect on the mean score for the scale P reflecting *benefits in change of performance*.

The GLM procedure did not identify any statistically significance relationships at the p value < .05; therefore, the conclusion was reached that there is not enough evidence of significance to reject any of the null hypotheses. The specific p values determined by the GLM for each test are shown in Table 11. Additional tests (included in Table 11) were also made with the total benefits scale score, which were also not significant. Results of the inferential statistical analysis, stated in other words, indicate that the faculty participants comprising this study sample perceived the same benefits *independent* of the years of teaching, the amount of personal funds expended, the length of stay abroad, and the type of activity experienced.

As a further analysis, an analysis of variance was then conducted, using the GLM, on the remaining independent variables in Part 1 of the questionnaire, excluding item 14 (Would you recommend participation in the program to a colleague? yes-no) which was answered 100% as "yes." The demographic variables used were: teaching field (item 1),

Table 11

P-values for the Effect of Four Demographic Variables on Four Scales of Perceived Benefits

	Scales			
Variables	Increased Knowledge	Changed Attitudes	Changed Performance	Total Perceived Benefits
Primary Teaching Field	.647	.525	.505	.617
Years of Teaching	.628	.199	.502	.343
Type of Abroad Program	.945	.968	.949	.957
Personal Financial Costs	.323	.811	.711	.630

Note: The p value selected for significance was $p < .05$.

highest academic degree (item 3), present academic or administrative rank (item 4), age at time of participation (item 7), percentage of activity costs paid by others (item 9), born outside the United States (item 10), speak another language (item 11), adequate orientation (item 12), and adequacy of living conditions abroad. There were no significant relationships between the remaining independent demographic variables and the three dependent benefits scales, nor the total benefits scale.

The lack of statistically significant relationships between any of the independent demographic variables and the three benefits scales did not justify further statistical analyses.

Several factors may have influenced the lack of significant relationships of the variables in this study. First, as previously discussed, the participants in this sample

likely represented a highly homogenous group of faculty members in the VCCS. For example, on the demographic variable of length of time teaching (item 2, Part 1) 77.6% of participants had taught more than 16 years (as shown in Table 2). This group representing three-fourths of all individuals in the sample of 87. Thus, it is possible that the standard demographic variables selected for the study, coupled with the limited response categories used in the questionnaire, simply were inadequate to capture the personal differences of this relatively homogenous group of individuals participating in academic activities overseas.

Another factor is that this group of faculty members may have had very similar expectations of the personal gains, which were met, in large part, during the overseas experience. The scales constructed from the rating items in Part 2 of the questionnaire may be inadequate to differentiate among the subtle differences in expectations of the individuals in the sample.

Themes Identified in the Interviews

The purpose of the second phase of the study, the conducting and analysis of 10 follow-on interviews, was to develop a more complete understanding of the potential benefits that faculty participants gained when they participated in academic-related activities abroad. The preliminary analysis of the responses on the written questionnaire led to the creation of the interview guide used for each interview. A copy of the guide is in Appendix D.

The author analyzed: the responses (verbal and nonverbal) of interviewees during the actual interviews, the tapes of the interviews, and the transcriptions of the interviews.

The analysis revealed four basic themes. The following section identifies these themes in the order judged most relevant by the author.

The first theme is that participants strongly believe that the overseas experience benefited them at a personal level. An intensity of emotion and intellectual curiosity was expressed in some form by every interviewee. Interviewees also expressed the personal satisfaction they experienced by examples they gave to describe specific events during the trips. Interviewees narrated their experiences as adventures, as exhilarating events that directly affected them. Some of these same events, however, viewed by the casual observer might be considered, at the least, as inconveniences and, at the worst, potential disasters for an overseas traveler. Yet, the interviewees often related the events with humor and the clear satisfaction of challenges successfully met.

The first night in Moscow for an art faculty member illustrates the positive attitude in overcoming potential problems:

> Interviewer: Have you maintained your contacts with the individuals you met while you were there?
>
> Interviewee D: I did for a long time with Vladimir. We have not been in contact—it is very difficult. In that – his wife speaks slightly better—I mean, my Russian goes as far as da and nyet, that's it. French, Italian – pretty good – as a matter of fact, it was really funny—the first night I was there, I mean I got there, and I met Vladimir, and you know, we were kind of with the head of the group, and he just kind of sent me off, and I headed off across Moscow—he spoke a very little bit of English and I had no idea where I was going—and we went off in a cab, Lenin subway, and this and that, actually he lived out in the suburbs. We ended up at his apartment and he had invited people over. Well, I guess from my resume he knew that I spoke French, so he had invited a friend over, who, her husband had been a diplomat in Paris, and so he spoke some French, so what we did—because I was showing slides of my work—they would ask her questions in Russian, she'd translate it to French, speak French to me, I'd have to think about it, and then speak French---so you know it was a back and forth kind of thing – that was just wonderful!... (Interview, April 4, 1997)

Participants expressed a personal excitement in traveling to distant lands and a personal satisfaction of sharing common interests with individuals from a culture other than one's own. Participants thought that they experienced personal growth in terms of better understanding the motivations of others in different cultures. The importance of contact with others was expressed by this faculty member, Interviewee H: "... the real key was we lived with the people, in areas that people (foreign visitors) will not have toured per se, but it was really extremely interesting, because we got to know the people." (Interview, March 12, 1997)

The in-depth appreciation for other cultures and personal assessments is typified by the comments of a faculty exchange participant observing religious differences within Northern Ireland:

> Interviewee J: So – they consider themselves Irish, but—it's interesting, I was very leery about what do you say? Well, I didn't want to say the wrong things, and it turns out that I had a family who was very blasé about it, because she was a Protestant from Ireland, he was a Catholic from Northern Ireland, and it was a very mixed marriage! That was one of the most interesting things, the attitudes they had—there are Catholic neighborhoods, there are Protestant neighborhoods—whereas, we talk about segregation and we think black and white, or Chicano and Anglo, here we don't think about it. At least in the areas I've lived my life, I've never seen religious separation. I mean, who would know, walking down the street, if that's a Catholic or a Protestant? They know! There are differences in dress, there are differences in where you see this person in the street. They do know, and apparently that level—when they get to further education level, and this is, I thought fascinating, that was the first level a lot of these kids had gone to nonsegregated schools. They go to the Catholic primary school or they go the Protestant primary school. And the colleges of further education are integrated. And integrated there doesn't mean black and white, it means Catholic and Protestant. You see it first in the classes—it'd be an interesting thing to see if you were there for a whole term—my exchange partner was Charles K., and he said his classes, when you start, particularly the 16 years olds that come in, they are absolutely polarized—the Catholics are over here and the Protestants are over there. And as they have to work together in labs and

> things, they do start to meet each other, but it's not until that point, and then you start to wonder, 'is that part of the root of their problems in all their political strife?' That these people are so polarized. And if they don't go on to future education...they may never interact with these people, except that it's 'us against them.' And it's really interesting... (Interview, March 25, 1997)

The consistently positive assessment of the activities expressed in personal terms was often associated with the friendships that evolved with other individuals met during the trips. Further supporting this theme was the personal frustration with the inadequate time available to accomplish the personal goals established by the participants. Potential problems such as language barriers or financial constraints were simply not major problems mentioned by participants.

The second theme that emerged from the interviews is that participants perceive significant professional benefits from the activities. The author was struck by the detailed knowledge and general understanding of the foreign educational systems, insightful political and economic assessments, and cultural differences discussed by the participants. This impression must be tempered, however, by the fact that it was not always clear how much of such specific knowledge was acquired by participants in preparation for their travel or as a direct result of their experience abroad. Many participants stated that they had informally prepared themselves for the overseas experience through readings, discussions with colleagues, and self-study.

The author categorized the professional benefits expressed in the interviews into two areas. One benefit area is related to the general understanding of global issues and, at times, a broader understanding of the subject matter of the participant's teaching field; the other professional benefits area is related to benefits associated with an expanded

understanding of pedagogical issues. A broad assessment of the professional benefits is expressed by this faculty administrator participating in a VaCIE-CEMP exchange, and dealing with education and industry:

> Interviewee C: Well, I think you'd have to be living under a rock if you didn't somehow, somewhere along the line try to get some international something—as part of your repertoire of skills. I mean, it's just—the world is becoming smaller and smaller, and you just really need to realize that we are not in this world alone, and that whether it's because of the economy, or the labor market, or whatever, the world is just shrinking, and you need to get a handle on what's going on in different parts of the country, and this was what I saw as an opportunity of my own professional development in terms of how my job is being done in another country, but also what—what is going on in that country that is the same and what is different, and how can I take what I know and add to it what I've learned from that to be able to do my job better, but at the same time I found myself making suggestions and recommendations in terms of how maybe they could consider doing some things. (Interview, March 14, 1997)

Considering both areas, the most significant professional benefits involved the increased appreciation of cultural differences between the culture of the foreign country visited and the American culture. Participants used the travel experience as a unique opportunity to make realistic comparisons of the attitudes and values held by themselves and others they met living in a foreign culture. Participants generally concluded from these comparisons that there were more commonly shared global values than differences. These comments are indicative of the cultural sensitivity of a faculty member who attended an academic conference in China:

> Interviewer: How well were your expectations of this activity met?
>
> Interviewee I: (long pause) I'm certainly more aware of people's culture. I think I'm more attuned to—people's heritage, the way they may see events different from mine. I'm born and bred in (rural Virginia community)—and of course, teaching students in this area—who many of them have never been to Fredericksburg, or Richmond—certainly not Washington. In this area it's very closed area, where 60, 70 percent are white population—are Caucasians—the

> other are Afro-Americans who are from this area. So it's a very closed kind of area. We now have a few Mexican workers in here. You just never see any—migrant workers. There are no foreigners here. We don't hear a foreign language, we don't see foreigners, we don't see foreign dress, any of those kinds of things that you would living in a metropolitan area. And so for me, it's made me more aware of cultural aspects. Even relating to the people from the other countries... (Interview, March 15, 1997)

Participants frequently expressed a new understanding of the educational philosophies of other cultures and the practical operation of educational systems in the foreign countries visited. This new and expanded understanding was based upon the comparison of participants' educational systems with the systems in the countries they visited. Participants were generally very careful in making these comparisons. As a result, participants saw advantages and disadvantages to both systems. These views confirmed the speculation of the author that participants were very circumspect in answering the questionnaire item, which included the assumption of the superiority of the American educational system. The participants, after actually observing other systems, simply did not accept the assumption and therefore either disagreed with the proposed benefit, or expressed no opinion on the rated benefit (i.e., "The academic program(s) in which I participated abroad: Confirmed to me that the American education system is the best.") An example of this critical thinking is expressed by a faculty member participating in a short faculty exchange to England:

> Interviewer: Can I ask you to maybe explain some of those particulars...
>
> Interviewee E: One of the facets there that interested me was the PDU, the Professional Development Unit. Each college has one, this is a unit—with full-time people in it—to help each individual faculty member who wants help to become a better teacher. We don't have anything like that here, nothing. You could call professional funding similar to it, but it's not the same thing...

> Interviewer: It's pretty unstructured here… especially you go to a conference, or get a small grant or something…
>
> Interviewee E: Right! And there it's just the opposite—almost too structured there. And that is one of the things that disturbed me the most—the fact there they are all incorporated—all the colleges are incorporated, so that each college becomes the predator of its neighbor. And they would actually try to close the neighbor down, and it's run like a business. And so they became incorporated in 1993, and this is the way they've been run. Just like a business. Like a business and would try to put another business out of business—colleges are run the same way. I call it 'academic Darwinism'—it's amazing. When I came back here to tell my colleagues about this, they couldn't believe it—that this is the way they're run there. Every college in the country is controlled by the government, and with that goes all the paperwork—tremendous amount of paperwork there—every faculty member, every person there has paperwork he has to complete. It's almost a nightmare, or really a nightmare—that surprised me… (Interview, March 21, 1997)

Another history faculty member, who participated in a group tour for community college faculty expressed the professional benefits in this manner:

> Interviewee F: In Mexico City we went to the Congress, and we met with some of the opposition political parties. And they showed us their plans and why they were opposing the government, and what they were trying to do within the Mexican system. And then we went to various ministries—the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Housing, and we met with one of the official government leaders, who told us why the government was doing such a great job in all these areas …and we got to visit a business. So when it came to learn about NAFTA, we saw how the workers were being impacted. But we also saw how the business was actually being helped, and so we would see the various sides to the questions about modern Mexico. NAFTA hurts some people, it helps others. There are poor people in Mexico, but there are businessmen who are doing well. There are the government agencies, and then there's the opposition. And so by looking at this variety, we had a much better picture of Mexico. We spent four weeks in Mexico, and even after years of teaching Latin American history—those four weeks—I learned more about Mexico—modern Mexico, than I'd ever known… (Interview, March 14, 1997).

The analyses of the first two themes above reveal that participants nearly always expressed the positive aspects of the experience. The few negative aspects of the experience involved a dissatisfaction with the actual time abroad compared to the

perceived need for time that participants felt they could have used. Financial considerations were also mentioned in a negative context. The financial considerations usually centered on the need for extensive financial planning necessitated by participants' personal limited financial resources, or the disappointment in the limited financial support provided by the participants' colleges. Thus, although financial considerations were not identified as significant impediments on the written questionnaires, the interviewees did express the need for careful financial planning.

The third theme is that the types of activities abroad consistently deal with academic-related activities and these activities vary greatly in form, scope, and preparation required. The response pattern to the written questionnaire item dealing with types of activities abroad (results shown in Table 4) fails to capture the variety and richness of the types of activities abroad cited by interview participants. The types of activities range from the straightforward, one-to-one exchange of the VaCIE-CEMP program to tightly scheduled, group educational projects to the free-wheeling, very individualized trip with travel objections changing at the end of each day. The most frequently discussed activities usually involved a few weeks overseas.

The wide range of overseas activities appears to reflect the ingenuity and broad range of professional contacts made by faculty and administrators. Participants sought out activities that met their particular goals, financial limitations, and specific interests. Some participants sought out very closely scheduled group trips with fellow community college faculty. Other participants were involved with activities overseas, which were completely planned and carried out by the participant alone.

One faculty member, whose teaching field is recreation management, traveled to a Russian national park with a group of American educators. His initial experience was not atypical of the complexity of academic-related activities of participants:

> Interviewee H: We had been told that we were going to be working with Russian teachers—going through teacher training, in the national park. We were to be there for two and a half, three weeks. When we arrived at the park, we were living in tents (incredulously stated). All of our meals were cooked out on an open fire. Probably some of the hardest camping that we had ever done. The only place to be was in the river, or in the lake. At the time, the weather was iffy. I believe it was in August and it rained almost every day. For the first—there were no teachers when we got there. There were about 10 of us. Mixed backgrounds, and for the first 10 days, nine days or so, the Russians took us out on tour of the park. We kind of realized that the Russians didn't know particularly what to do with us. So, myself and my wife, Sharon, and one of the Americans was—works professionally as a translator, and so he spoke Russian but could translate very well. I sat down and said, 'we don't need to do this, we've seen enough of the park; we need to do something…' We weren't really doing anything. So we sat down and put a training program, which we based from the information we gleaned from the director--we put together a training program, which we felt would be good, and then we did some design. We were living in a campground area, so we drew a—they had no maps, so we drew a topographical map, using a protractor and a compass and a ruler and actually taped together some paper, because we were doing it on a picnic table. And did a topographical survey—it was about 20 acres—and then did, using plastic bags, we cut up—we did an overlay for design in terms of what we thought should be done with that particular ground. This impressed, evidently, the director. We were invited over to his office and did a presentation with the architect there. And we got into some debates about preservation, conservation, management of the park, and so we did about seven other designs of different sites over the next five or six days… (Interview, March 12, 1997).

The fourth theme is that <u>it is difficult to identify positive changes in participants' teaching performance or changes in course content as a result of the overseas experience.</u> This theme would appear very relevant because of the need to bring the overseas experience into the classroom and the learning situation. Interviewees expressed a concern to have their personal experiences abroad manifest in the teaching process.

However, when interviewees were pressed to describe how their teaching or course content changed as a result of the experience, few could do so. The traditional and most frequent change mentioned was the incorporation of more specific and vivid examples in lectures or the use of sides and photographs in presentations. Some interviewees mentioned that their teaching styles and course content did not change because the methods they used were readily superior to what they observed overseas. Some typical responses to the general question of "how has this experience affected your teaching" are as follows:

> Interviewee I: I think I purposely include more transcultural aspects into nursing, and I try to give the students from this area a little more exposure than I would if I was in the metropolitan area. Because they have no idea what the world out there is like. And so I think I do more of it ... (Interview, March 25, 1997)
>
> Interviewee F: ...I did write up a module, and then I can fit it into my Latin American history class, and then I have information and resources that can be part of my class (author's comment: participants were required to create a learning module in order to participate in the trip). ...I can say some specific things—'this is what I saw, this is what I heard when I was there, and it's different from saying, 'well, this book, or this newspaper report says that'... (Interview, March 14, 1997)
>
> Interviewee D: Oh—well, I'm just trying to think of all the various ways, because it has (affected participant's teaching). In just talking to my students—particularly my painting students—what I've seen. I show them the slides of the other artists' work, how they work the images that hey saw, things that surround them in their life that they brought to their image making... (Interview, April 4, 1997)
>
> Interviewee G: Very good, in fact! Because the students really like to hear personal stories. If I can say, 'I was here,' 'I did that,' I saw this myself,' then they're much more attentive, they think that's much better than reading it in a book. Sometimes I bring pictures—I don't have the slides made up like J.B. does—but sometimes I have pictures. And they really like to see personal part, things, so it's a nice teaching tool, more real-world relevance. They do have motivational benefit impact on some students—and it makes me more enthusiastic!...So just my experience helps me to appreciate and understand some

> of the things students tell me about—international students are telling me about where they came from, how things work in their countries. (Interview, March 13, 1997)
>
> Interviewee A: Well, I give a lot of consideration for those with, language problems, especially those who are not ready to learn language course because of the language difficulties they have. I work very closely with them. To be honest with you, yes, I do. Because that's exactly what I did in Scotland. (author's note: participant was an exchange instructor in Scotland for a full semester). I found a few weak students, and I worked with them. In my hour time, not class time necessarily. (Interview, March 31, 1997)

It was also difficult to discern any change in participants' behavior in other areas of direct application such as acting as a resource person for other faculty, promoting international student clubs or activities on campus or in the community, or directly influencing international education on the campus. Some interviewees did give some specific examples of such professional activity, but only after prodding by the author.

The author believes that there are two considerations affecting the difficulty in determining what changes, if any, occurred in the behavior in the classroom or outside the classroom. The first consideration is the intensely personal nature of the academic experience abroad. Participants gain a deep understanding of others as well as of themselves. This understanding may be very subtle and not easily translated into perceivable changes in professional behavior. Further, the many years of teaching experience and middle age of the majority of participants also argue for fewer changes in participants' long established teaching styles. Although direct observable behavior may be difficult to verbalize or detect, the author believes that the participants change, at least, in their sensitivity to others and especially to others from a different culture. Thus, the

actual behavioral changes may be very subtle and not easy to describe even by the participants themselves.

The other possible consideration is that participants did not enter into the overseas activity with the intent of changing their teaching style or courses. If this consideration is valid, then participants had no expectations nor perceived need to incorporate what they learned through the experience into their classroom behavior. The wide range of activities abroad and lack of formal requirements to assess the benefits in relation to the learning process support the perception that the academic experience was intended to mainly benefit the participant at a personal level.

In summary, the results of the analysis of the in-depth interviews confirmed the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the written questionnaire: Faculty and administrators perceived the benefit of the overseas experience in terms of personal satisfaction, increased professional knowledge, but not necessarily in significant changes in the participants' behavior in and out of the classroom.

The next chapter will summarize the main findings of this study and propose policy recommendations.

Chapter V

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the major findings of the study and policy recommendations that flow from the findings. This chapter consists of five sections. The first section presents the major findings of the study. The second through the fourth sections address Aim #3 of the study: to propose policy recommendations to improve the faculty international exchange programs and faculty study-abroad programs within the VCCS, and consequently, to improve the international education effort in the community colleges in Virginia. The second section proposes recommendations for individual faculty members considering participating in an academic activity abroad. Section three proposes policy recommendations pertaining to individual colleges. Section four contains policy recommendations for the Virginia Community College System, as a whole. The fifth and final section discusses implications for future research.

Major Findings

Four major findings came from the analysis of the data in the written questionnaires and the analysis of the follow-on, in-depth interviews of a select sample of questionnaire respondents. These major findings are presented in summary statement form and accompanied by the primary rationale for the findings.

The first finding explains the primary broad benefits that community college faculty gain by participating in academic activities abroad. This finding is: **Faculty and**

administrators who participate in academic activities overseas are very satisfied with their experience and strongly believe that they gain significant personal and professional benefits from the experience.

The very high levels of agreement with the benefits dealing with personal satisfaction and professional growth and knowledge among participants responding to the questionnaire strongly support this finding. Individual interviews confirm the very high satisfaction at the personal and professional levels. The interviewees expressed high enthusiasm, deep personal satisfaction, and an increased comprehension of the breath of the education profession. The overwhelming benefits expressed in the written questionnaire and the interviews focus on the satisfaction in understanding other cultures through direct contact with other cultures. Besides simply understanding other cultures, most participants also critically compare these cultures with their own cultural values and draw conclusions on the importance of conveying cultural differences through enhanced international education efforts with their students and colleagues.

The interview analyses further identified the enthusiastic support that participants give to the VaCIE-CEMP exchange program, which had the first exchanges in 1996. The careful matching of exchange partners, the flexibility in the timing of the individual exchanges, the adequacy of the orientation program, and finally the strong administrative support from the program coordinator are all factors cited by the interview participants who traveled under the VaCIE-CEMP program.

This first finding is generally consistent with the findings reported for faculty from four-year institutions (Goodwin and Nacht, 1991; Razzano, 1994; Khalatbari-

Tonekaboni, 1986). Some of the similarities are opportunity to gather data and ideas, an increased sympathy toward students, an increase in one's level of sensitivity, tolerance and empathy for the problems of others (Goodwin and Nacht, 1991); better understanding of self and society, increased cultural awareness and empathy, opportunity to acquire authentic materials and examples to use in class (Razzano, 1994); and an increase in understanding people, enlarged the understanding of participants' academic field (Khalatbari-Tonekaboni, 1986).

Participants express very few negative comments or regrets associated with the overseas activities. The negative comments are centered on the lack of adequate time on the trips to accomplish participants' goals, and from the interview analysis, the concern over obtaining more financial support from their colleges or the need to carefully manage personal financial resources related to the travel. Interestingly, the negative aspects cited by faculty participants at four-year schools are not the same as seen by the community college faculty in this study. Goodwin and Nacht (1991) described negative aspects such as professional resentment by colleagues, losing ground in advancement and research opportunities at home institutions, financial loss, and family complications.

One logical explanation for the differences in negative aspects may be the relatively short period of time that community college faculty actually spend abroad (i.e., two weeks was the most frequently reported length of stay abroad in this study, compared to the six months or a year often experienced by four-year faculty). The shorter periods abroad may mean that community college individuals and college administrations can accommodate the changes and disruptions associated with overseas activities more easily

than four-year schools. A second explanation for the differences may be the professional orientation of the two groups of faculty. Community college faculty are focused on classroom teaching with little emphasis on research and professional publication. This orientation is in contrast to the commonly understood view of "publish or perish" for faculty at four-year institutions. A third possible explanation is that the community college faculty sample in this study comprises relatively senior teachers, who, most likely, have achieved the maximum of their promotion potential; whereas many of the studies dealing with four-year faculty imply fewer senior individuals where future promotion considerations are important.

The second major finding addresses the type of impediments faced by participants to a successful overseas academic experience. The second finding is: **Participating faculty and administrators do not identify any major impediments that prevent a successful overseas experience, although the lack of institutional support and adequate financial arrangements are mentioned by some participants.**

The questionnaire analysis shows that nearly one-half of the participants did not experience impediments. When impediments are mentioned, the impediments cover a broad range of issues with of lack of institutional and/or government support and financial considerations most frequently cited. The interview analysis further shows that when impediments are mentioned concerning a lack of institutional support, the specifics usually involve a perceived lack of administrative support in managing the complex task of organizing a short, intense period overseas. Related to the inadequate administrative support, some participants also believed that their institutions could have provided more

financial resources for their particular overseas activity. Only a few participants describe an indifference and sometimes even hostility by some academic administrators during the planning phases of the proposed activity abroad; none mentions an indifference or negative attitude after the completion of the trip.

The impediments that participants do identify should be considered in the context of these conditions: participants are involved in a wide range of overseas activities and it is highly unlikely that the normal small administrative staff within a community college has the international awareness or experience to provide support for the variety of the activities available to potential participants. Also, few current community college administrators, as reflected in the very small number on the initial list of possible participants and the actual sample completing the questionnaire, have themselves participated in academic activities overseas. Therefore, some administrators may not initially support an individual faculty member's desire to participate in such activity and the potential changes (or potential disruptions from the an administrator's point of view) associated with such activity, but may become more supportive upon the return of the faculty member and by observing the enthusiasm and personal and professional satisfaction shown by the member.

It is difficult to compare this second finding to studies dealing with faculty overseas activities because such studies do not address impediments per se. Goodwin and Nacht (1991) identified personal and professional "costs," which may be considered impediments. As discussion above on negative aspects of the overseas experience

indicates, the few reported impediments for community college faculty are different from the "costs" reported for four-year faculty.

The third major finding focuses on the implication of the academic activity abroad to participants' performance as teachers and administrators. The third finding is: **There are limited indications that community college faculty and administrators who participate in the academic activities abroad significantly improve their teaching or performance as administrators, incorporate significant international education aspects into the courses they teach, or further international education outside the classroom at their institutions.**

Analyses of the questionnaire responses and interview comments show that participants report very few changes in teaching behavior or courses as a result of their abroad experience. The use of better and more interesting examples in classroom lectures and discussions is the most frequently cited specific change these faculty have made, based upon the overseas experience. However, the analyses also show that participants demonstrate a sincere enthusiasm for understanding and appreciating other cultures, an attitude that is most likely passed on to students in a subtle manner. Some participants do mention an increased appreciation of the culturally diverse backgrounds of their students. This appreciation may also manifest itself in a subtle manner in improved communications during the learning process in the classroom.

The study analyses could identify few behavioral changes or course content changes other than those cited above. One participant did prepare a specific teaching module incorporating his experiences; however, the particular program under which the

faculty member traveled abroad required the creation of the module. A few participants did accept invitations to speak before interested academic and community groups upon their return to their home colleges. However, little evidence supports major teaching changes such as adoption of a teaching technique observed overseas or other specific examples such as expansion of reading lists to include foreign authors or commentators, specific changes to course requirement to incorporate information or sources from other countries or cultures in student project or papers, or critical thinking exercises in comparing problems or issues from a global view.

The interviews did reveal sincere enthusiasm in participants for the education profession and their role in the profession. As already mentioned above, the renewed commitment to teaching and learning, as a result of the overseas experience, may have a positive impact on students in a subtle manner. It should also be noted that the self-reporting methodology used in this study may not have detected such subtle changes in teaching, which may be difficult to express by participants.

This third finding, dealing with limited changes in teaching behavior for community college faculty, also differs from the more positive findings of studies with faculty from four-year institutions. Studies based upon four-year institution faculty typically include examples of both specific and general benefits related to improved teaching: improvement in teaching when faculty use new material, anecdotes and comparative perspectives (Goodwin and Nacht, 1991); or improvement in teaching because faculty acquire authentic materials and examples to use in class, they create lessons that become more vivid and less abstract for students by referring to foreign

settings, and they become more creative and resourceful in class preparation (Razzano, 1994).

The finding that there are limited changes in teaching behavior also differs from the small number of studies focusing on community college faculty. For example, Hatton (1995) proposed these benefits in the teaching area as a result of the overseas experience: use of teaching materials that are reviewed and revised by faculty members as a result of the overseas activity, and a bolstered faculty self-image and improved standards of classroom presentations. Whereas the results of this study as presented in the third finding, support fewer changes in teaching performance.

The fourth major finding states the implication of the academic abroad activities to institutions. The fourth finding is: **The wide range of academic overseas activities in use by community college faculty and administrators provides low cost and successful programs, which promote both the personal and professional growth of individual faculty through, at the minimum, increased knowledge of foreign cultures and countries and a greater awareness of the diversity of students within the classroom. Although the research revealed limited changes in overt professional behavior, such programs may provide unique *opportunities* to enhance international education in community colleges.**

Clearly the financial costs of the academic activities, as reported by participants, is relatively low. Although financial considerations are cited by interviewees in a negative context, the lack of more financial support is not critical to participation. It would thus appear that the financial support provided by others or the use of the

participant's own resources is adequate to encourage trips abroad. This study, of course, did not include potential participants who may not have participated because they could not afford the costs.

The strong benefits reported by participants also create the *opportunity* to enhance international education in the classroom and institution. Participants acquire firsthand knowledge of other cultures, the participants are very motivated (or reinvigorated) toward teaching and their teaching field, and they often acquire actual materials to use in the classroom. These conditions present the clear opportunity to enhance international education at an institution. Unfortunately, the existence of opportunities does not ensure that such opportunities are realized. The limited indications of performance changes by participants must lead one to conclude that these opportunities are not being realized at the home colleges of the participants in this study.

Considering the four major findings, the author proposes policy recommendations to promote faculty and administrators academic activities abroad, which, as a result, create the conditions to enhance international education on campuses. The recommendations are made in the context of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and consider three organizational levels within the VCCS. The first level deals with recommendations for the individual faculty member. The second level deals with the policy recommendations for individual colleges. The third level deals with the system level policy recommendations. The following sections address each level.

Policy Recommendations for the Individual Faculty Member

The individual faculty member considering the trip abroad experience should carefully consider the benefits that fellow faculty members have obtained in terms of personal satisfaction, excitement, professional rejuvenation, and professional knowledge from academic activities abroad. These benefits appear achievable by faculty members regardless of the number of years teaching, and the amount of funds expended. Thus, the individual faculty member should take time to personally reflect on the value of the potential experience for himself or herself. The proposed recommendation for individual reflection can only be achieved by the individual, although it can be encouraged by other organizational levels within the VCCS. It should also be noted that from a professional development consideration academic activities overseas may be one of the few professional development opportunities available but not yet used by the large number of experienced senior faculty in the VCCS.

In conjunction with personal reflection, the individual faculty member should seek out myriad overseas experiences available. This study illustrates the wide range of overseas activities in use by faculty members to achieve personal and professional academic goals. It is unlikely that any single reference source of information would be adequate to preclude the personal research effort of the individual faculty member. In addition to the many types of activities that should be considered, there are also various sources of funds for such activity which the individual faculty member must seek out for him/herself. In summary, **the recommendations to the individual community college faculty member or administrator are to evaluate the benefits of an overseas**

experience for oneself and then personally seek out activity options and possible funding sources.

Policy Recommendations for the College

Over the course of this study, it became apparent that the level of interest by college administrators, within the VCCS, in supporting and promoting academic activities abroad varies considerably. At most colleges participating in the written survey, there apparently was no central point (neither an office nor an individual) within the administration that was cognizant of faculty activities in academic activities abroad. The author assumes that if institutions had limited knowledge of these activities, then the institution most likely could provide little information to promote or facilitate such activities. Although this study has identified significant personal and professional benefits that participating faculty achieve from the experience abroad, the college may not benefit from the experience, especially if there is no college-wide knowledge of the activity or experience. The study clearly identifies the potential contribution that faculty who participate in overseas activity can contribute to their college in the area of international education within the academic community and in the outside community.

Considering the direct value of the overseas experience to the participants, and by extension to the college, as a first step, **each college should create a central resource entity to promote academic activities abroad.** A central resource entity may exist within the administrative office that promotes and administers professional development, or it may be represented by a single experienced faculty member anywhere within the college. The primary functions of such a resource entity would be to provide information

on opportunities abroad, to act as a coordinator for networking interested faculty, and to assist the administration in allocating funding for overseas activities.

Concurrent with the establishment of a resource entity, **each college should establish a policy that acknowledges the potential benefits to faculty and the college, affirms the support of the institution to academic-related activities abroad, and insists on incorporating the benefits gained by the participants into the student learning process.** The establishment of a college policy should achieve the objectives of promoting the overseas activity as valuable for personal and professional growth (placed in published college professional plans), establishing expectations of returning faculty to incorporate the benefits of the experience into the student learning experience (areas for comment in annual performance evaluations), and reaffirming the importance of international education to the institution.

Each college should dedicate a specific amount of professional development funds for faculty participating in overseas activities. This study indicates that the funding actually used and needed by faculty is not excessive. The willingness of the college to consider some level of financial commitment to support overseas activity is an additional positive encouragement for promoting the activity and international education within the college.

In a related international education issue, **each college should encourage, support, and plan for at least one foreign faculty visit annually,** either as part of exchanges or as single visits. Those interviewees who had participated in exchanges

often mentioned that home faculty and students gain significant insights on foreign cultures and educational systems from the visits of foreign faculty.

Finally, **each college should establish a simple evaluation method to promote the use of the knowledge and insights gained by participants in campus efforts to internationalize the curriculum and internationalize activities outside the classroom and in the local community.** Although this study does not conclusively demonstrate the direct influence of the faculty experience on the student learning process or the external community, the question of this influence is central to promoting faculty academic activities abroad. Interviewees mentioned that they would have done more to share their newly acquired insights with colleagues and the local community if simply asked by others or if they had perceived greater enthusiasm and appreciated by the college for the benefits they had gained from the overseas experience. The college could promoted the varies benefits of international educational as cited by Raby (1996b) by recognizing those institutional and community constituents who would receive benefits and enlisting these same constituents in promoting international education within the institution.

This study illustrates the important roles of individual faculty initiative and the support and involvement of the individual college. However, there is also an important impact that a state-wide, central community college system can achieve.

Policy Recommendations for the Virginia Community College System

This study shows that community college faculty who participate and gain benefits from academic activities overseas are located throughout the geographically and economically diverse state of Virginia. The high frequency of perceived benefits for the

entire sample in this study indicates that any community college faculty member, whether they are from a rural or urban college or a large or small institution, will likely perceive significant personal and professional benefits. Thus, the entire state community college educational system can gain from promoting faculty participation in academic activities overseas. The expansion of global or international knowledge in regional economic activities by means of the local community college may well lead to economic growth into foreign markets and, at the same time, increased foreign investment in the Virginia economy.

The VCCS, as state-wide institutions, can enhance the opportunities for community college faculty to participate in academic activities abroad by promoting the efforts of organizations that offer opportunities state-wide. The in-depth interviews identified two such organizations: the VaCIE-CEMP faculty exchange program and the Fulbright grants available for study trips abroad. Therefore, a policy recommendation is that **the VCCS should support expanded participation by colleges in the VaCIE-CEMP faculty exchanges by establishing professional development funds specifically for faculty and administrators who participate in this exchange program and promote an increased use of Fulbright grants for group faculty travel abroad.** The financial resources needed for this policy can be considered relatively small compared to the potential return to local colleges and communities. Again, this study shows that relatively small amounts of money are needed by participants engaged in activities overseas.

A second policy recommendation is that **the VCCS should specifically target the college presidents and academic deans within the system to actively promote individual faculty participation in academic activities overseas.** This policy addresses the most frequently cited impediments reported by participating faculty: lack of institutional support/government support (17.8% of all responses given). One means of implementing this policy would be to include a presentation on the topic in the agendas of system-sponsored annual meetings for presidents and deans. Such presentations should convey the benefits and the impediments involved in academic activities abroad. Presentations should be made by individuals who participated in overseas activities. This study shows that the first-person narrative by participants is an effective means for understanding the richness of the experiences and the positive implications to the participating faculty.

The presidents and deans should actively promote faculty participation by considering actions in three areas. The first area involves the expanded use of the faculty evaluation form to recognize the professional development that participants have achieved by participating in overseas programs. The evaluation system could also be used to recognize changes in teaching revisions in curricula, that participants made as a result of their overseas experience.

The second area involves providing reassigned time for curricular changes and professional writing that result from international study programs. By providing some reassign time, participants will be encouraged to incorporate their experiences into their own courses and work with colleagues, into other areas of international education within

their colleges. The opportunity to do professional writing may also encourage collaboration with foreign faculty, again expanding the initial abroad experience for the participant and furthering the sharing of the experience with the college community.

The third area to actively promote faculty participation involves providing stipends for future participants to encourage actual travel or for past participants to engage in the professional activities outlined above. The awarding of stipends can also function as a symbolic gesture to demonstrates that activities to enhance international education within the institution are worth doing and are valued.

The two policy recommendations for the VCCS are the policies that would require minimal resources and yet contribute effectively to improving the opportunities to support international education efforts at Virginia community colleges.

As a final consideration, the author proposes future research areas to expand the findings of the current study.

Future Research Implications

Based upon the findings of the current study there are three major areas for future research. The first area for additional research is the identification of personal and professional characteristics of individual community college faculty, which are related to the level of the benefits participants perceive. The author believes that identifying the relationships between individuals' characteristics and their level of perceived benefits would be very important in creating tailored opportunities for overseas activities for a larger number of community college faculty. A greater range of opportunities created specifically for designated categories of faculty would likely expand the number of

participants. For example, different activities could be created for junior faculty versus senior faculty, *provided* each group is, in fact, different in the benefits they obtain from overseas activities.

The author believes the methodology used in the current study could not gather precise data to identify specific statistical relationships between the level of benefits and characteristics of the participants. In particular, the benefits items included in the written questionnaire may have been too restrictive in the range of possible benefits, and thus did not allow for sufficient differentiated responses among respondents. The same type of shortcoming may have occurred in the demographic portion of the questionnaire, in that the items did not permit sufficient differentiated responses from respondents. Additionally, the participants of the current study, although they likely reflected very accurately the characteristics of the population of the faculty in the VCCS who participated in activities abroad, were also very alike in age, teaching experience, and academic rank. Future research should consider the homogeneity of the sample population and develop a more sensitive evaluation instrument and precise methodology.

A second area for future research deals with the need to identify the extent that perceived benefits by participants are manifested in the actual professional behavior of the of participants in the classroom. The current study established that participants clearly perceive significant benefits, but the study did not establish the extent that participants used the benefits reported in significantly advancing the teaching-learning process. Methodology used in the current study was designed to identify the changes in professional behavior as self-reported by participants; another methodology should be

considered that can identify the apparently subtle attitudinal and behavioral changes that the experienced teachers comprising the current sample may have made in the classroom or in personal values that affect others.

A third area for future research is to focus on student outcomes for those students taught by faculty who have traveled abroad. This research is suggested by the results of the current study that it is difficult to identify subtle teaching changes by focusing on the teacher. Since the primary goal of the community college experience is student learning, future research could attempt to ascertain student learning as related to the experience of faculty who participate in academic activities abroad. In the final analysis, future research must answer if and how these very positive academic experiences for community college faculty are reflected in the learning experience of community college students.

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Appendix A

Alexandria, Virginia
October 2, 1996

Dean Name
College
Address

Dear Dean Name:

I request your participation in a VCCS-approved research project. The project is part of a dissertation supervised by the National Center for Community College Education at George Mason University.

The project will study the benefits and impediments associated with two faculty programs: international exchanges and study-abroad programs. A growing number of community college faculty, in the VCCS and nationally, are participating in such programs. However, there is little information on the benefits nor the influence on actual teaching performance of these programs for community college faculty.

Results of this research effort should provide your institution and the VCCS with an objective basis for future policy actions concerning these programs. The results of the project will be provided to you in the form of a final project report.

Your cooperation is vital to identify those members of your teaching and administrative faculty who have participated in such programs. Specifically, I kindly request that you provide the names of those **full-time faculty** members who have **participated in such programs** approved by your college. Individuals should have spent at **least one week abroad under the program**. Please consider any member who has participated over the **previous five academic years** (1990-91 through 1995-96).

Identified faculty members will be asked to voluntarily participate in the project and complete a written questionnaire dealing with their perceptions of the benefits and impediments of these programs in which they participated. Also, a small sample of individuals from all VCCS participants will be asked to take part in a follow-up interview to clarify the questionnaire data. Complete confidentiality will be maintained for each respondent. The total time to complete the questionnaire will be less than 30 minutes.

Please forward names by e-mail, telephone, fax, or mail by **November 1, 1996**. Questionnaires will be mailed to individuals immediately after that date.

Stephen Z. Kovacs
Alexandria Campus, NVCC
3001 N. Beauregard Street
Alexandria, Va 22311
telephone: (703) 845-6290, fax: (703) 845-6450
e-mail: (VCCS) nvkovas
(internet) nvkovas@nv.cc.va.us

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this project.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen Z. Kovacs

Appendix B

Annandale, Virginia
Date

«Title» «FirstName» «LastName»
President
«College»
«StreetAddress»
«City» «State» «Zip»

Dear «Title» «LastName»:

Stephen Z. Kovacs is a full-time employee of the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College. He is also a doctoral candidate at George Mason University. As part of his dissertation he will study the benefits of faculty international exchanges and faculty study-abroad programs in the Virginia Community College System. Permission for conducting this research within the VCCS has been given by Dr. Barbara A. Wyles in her role as acting Chancellor, Academic Services and Research.

This study is the first of its kind to address the benefits of these potentially significant programs in a community college system. As we all respond to the challenges of a more interconnected world, such studies can provide the basis for reason actions.

In support of his research, he will be distributing a questionnaire as a means of collecting data. I kindly request your support for this study. The questionnaire will be mailed during the week of November 12th to those faculty members who have participated in faculty exchanges and study-abroad programs within the past five years.

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this project. Mr. Kovacs will provide you the results of the study.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Ernst

Appendix C

Do not mark in the above area

VCCS Questionnaire for Teaching and Administrative Faculty Participating in Programs Abroad

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Instructions: This questionnaire is intended to solicit information from you as a member of the VCCS, and a participant in professional activities involving travel abroad. Part I asks for general information about you and the programs you used. Part II asks you to indicate your agreement or disagreement with a number of statements. Part III asks you to add any comments you think would help in understanding the responses in the other parts. All responses on this questionnaire are confidential and results will be reported in the aggregate.

PART I : Please darken in the bubble or enter a response which best describes you. Use a #2 pencil.

1. What is your primary teaching field? _____

2. How many years of teaching/administration do you have?
   ○ 0-5 yrs. ○ 6-10 yrs. ○ 11-15 yrs. ○ 16-20 yrs. ○ Over 20 yrs.

3. Highest academic degree you obtained?
   ○ Associate
   ○ Bachelors
   ○ Masters
   ○ Special degree (Specify _____)
   ○ Doctorate

4. Your present academic rank or administrative title?
   ○ Instructor
   ○ Assistant Professor
   ○ Associate Professor
   ○ Full Professor
   ○ Division Chair
   ○ Director/Coordinator
   ○ Dean
   ○ Provost
   ○ President
   ○ Other (Specify _____)

5. Please indicate the type(s) of international educational activities, approved by your college, in which you have participated in another country(ies).
   ○ Faculty/administrative exchange programs
   ○ Teaching (excluding exchanges)
   ○ International study abroad program
   ○ Professional consultations
   ○ Educational tours
   ○ Research abroad program
   ○ Fellowship for advanced study abroad
   ○ Other (Specify _____)

6. What was the length of stay abroad under the program?
   ○ One week ○ 2-3 weeks ○ 1-6 months ○ 7-12 months ○ Over 12 months

7. What was your age at time of participating in abroad program?
   ○ Under-30 yrs. ○ 30-40 yrs. ○ 41-50 yrs. ○ 51-60 yrs. ○ Over 60 yrs.

8. What was your personal financial cost to participate in the program?
   ○ Under $500 ○ $501-1500 ○ $1501-2500 ○ $2501-3500 ○ Over $3500 ○ No Personal Cost

9. What is your best estimate of the percentage of the total program cost paid by your college or other source. ____%

10. Were you born outside the U.S.? ○ Yes ○ No

11. Do you speak another language(s)? ○ Yes ○ No

12. Did you have an adequate orientation prior to arrival overseas? ○ Yes ○ No

13. How would you judge your living conditions while abroad under the program? ○ Excellent ○ Satisfactory ○ Unsatisfactory

14. Would you recommend participation in the program to a colleague? ○ Yes ○ No

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PART II : Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. For each statement darken the bubble which best reflects your response. Please use a #2 pencil.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral, no opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The academic program(s) in which I participated abroad:					
1. Increased my awareness of teaching methods used in international academic systems.					
2. Provided observations to be used in my teaching.					
3. Enhanced my ability in comparing cultures.					
4. Increased my knowledge about educational and academic systems of foreign countries.					
5. Increased my international understanding.					
6. Helped me learn how other peoples and nations solve problems.					
7. Gave me more insight about other ways of living.					
8. Motivated learning about other peoples and nations.					
9. Developed my understanding of other cultures.					
10. Increased my awareness of customs of the host country.					
11. Increased my knowledge of my teaching/administrative field.					
12. Improved my foreign language proficiency.					
13. Increased my factual knowledge of the geography, history, and economy of the host country.					
14. Gave me an interest in foreign politics, international relations, and world affairs.					
15. Allowed me to collect materials for teaching.					
16. Increased my adaptability to new cultural environments.					
17. Increased my adaptability to my own environment.					
18. Developed my problem solving ability.					
19. Increased my understanding of my international students.					
20. Motivated me to look for other similar international opportunities for the future.					
21. Made adaptability to other cultures easier for me.					
22. Helped me to find that cultural differences are not major barriers for scholarly activity.					
23. Provided a good experience personally.					
24. Provided a good experience professionally.					
25. Was not worth the financial expenditure.					
26. Made me a strong supporter for internationalizing education in the community college.					
27. Increased my enthusiasm for teaching.					
28. Expanded my perceptions of research areas in my field.					
29. Instilled new values and attitudes in me as a person and as an American.					
30. Confirmed to me that the American educational system is the best.					
31. Allowed me to make specific changes in the written material used in the classroom.					
32. Provided international examples to use in my teaching.					
33. Motivated me to participate in international activities on my campus.					
34. Provided the opportunity for me to become a resource person for cooperative programs between my college and foreign educational organizations.					
35. Provided the opportunity for me to become a resource person for my fellow faculty/administrators.					
36. Motivated me to take actions to introduce global perspectives into my classes.					
37. Improved my ability to make friends and meet strangers.					
38. Encouraged me to write articles for professional publications.					
39. Motivated me to use the Internet more.					
40. Gave me the opportunity to develop friendships with my colleagues overseas.					

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Instructions: Please provide your comments to these questions in the space provided.
You may attach additional sheets if you wish.

1. What motivated you to participate in the abroad program(s)?

2. Did you experience impediments to successful participation in the program(s)? What were these impediments?

3. Why should faculty exchanges and study abroad programs be encouraged in the community college?

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. Please return the completed questionnaire in the pre-addressed envelope as soon as possible. The final report on this research project will be provided to your college.

Appendix D

Interview Guide

1. Please describe the activity you participated in abroad.
2. What motivated you, personally and professionally, to participate in the experience?
3. How closely were your expectations for the trip met?
4. Many of your colleagues indicated "no opinion" on possible benefits from their experiences in some specific areas such as an increased ability to solve problems, meet strangers, and make friends. How did your experience affect your abilities in these areas?
5. How important were financial consideration associated with your experience?
6. What impact has your experience abroad had on your teaching?
7. How has your experience affected international education at your campus?
8. How has your international academic activity contributed to academic career opportunities?
9. The written questionnaire may have limited your opportunity to provide a complete picture of your experience. Would you like to expand on any of your responses?
10. Is there anything you would like to add to this issue which this study did not address?

Appendix E

Annandale, Virginia
Date

«Title» «FirstName» «LastName»
«Division» «Campus»
«College»
«StreetAddress»
«City» «State» «Zip»

Dear «Title» «LastName»:

I request your participation in a VCCS-approved research project by completing the enclosed questionnaire. The project will study the benefits and impediments associated with faculty academic programs involving travel abroad. The project is also part of my dissertation supervised by the National Center for Community College Education at George Mason University.

Your name was provide to me as an individual who has participated in an international academic experience. I sincerely hope you will share your experience. Results of this research effort should provide the VCCS, and indirectly your college, with an objective basis for future policy actions concerning abroad programs. Anonymity of the respondents will be assured and any information used will be cited only in summary form.

I kindly request that you complete the enclosed questionnaire and return to me in the enclosed envelope by (Date). The questionnaire can be completed within fifteen minutes.

Thank you for your cooperation and participation in this project.

Sincerely,

Stephen Z. Kovacs

Appendix F

Teaching and Administrative Fields Reported by Participants

Categories	Key Words from Questionnaires	
Humanities	economics	English comp
	economics, geography	English/humanities
	English	English/reading
	English	ESL/Spanish
	English	fine arts
	English	foreign lang/eng (sic)
	English	German
	English	history
	English	history
	English	history
	English	history
	English	history
	English	history
	English	history/philosophy
	English	humanities
	studio art/art history	Spanish
	Spanish	
Science	biology	math
	biology	math
	biology	psychology
	biology	psychology
	geology	psychology
	math	psychology
	math	social science
	math	sociology
	math	sociology
Technical fields	admin support technology	horticulture
	computer info sys	horticulture
	computer info sys	info sys mgm
	engr/industrial technology	paper technology
	forestry technology	recreation & parks
	veterinary technology	

Administrator/counselors		
	Adult education	counseling
	Adult education	counseling
	Adult education	counseling
	Bibliographic instruction	counselor
	Counseling	student services
Health fields	nursing	nutrition
	nursing	optician rx (sic)
	nursing	radiography
Business	accounting	business
	accounting	business mgt
	bus management	marketing
Criminal justice	criminal justice	
	criminal justice	
	paralegal studies	

Appendix G

Means and Standard Deviations for 40 Items Reflecting Perceived Benefits (N=87)

	Mean	SD
The academic program(s) in which I participated abroad:		
1. Increased my awareness of teaching methods used in international academic systems.	4.10	1.03
2. Provided observations to be used in my teaching.	4.28	0.89
3. Enhanced my ability in comparing cultures.	4.77	0.45
4. Increased my knowledge about educational and academic systems of foreign countries.	4.49	0.79
5. Increased my international understanding.	4.71	0.50
6. Helped me learn how other people and nations solve problems.	3.97	0.90
7. Gave me more insight about other way of living.	4.55	0.61
8. Motivated learning about other people and nations.	4.49	0.64
9. Developed my understanding of other cultures.	4.51	0.61
10. Increased my awareness of customs of the host country.	4.72	0.47
11. Increased my knowledge of my teaching/administrative field.	3.66	1.15
12. Improved my foreign language proficiency.	3.06	1.13
13. Increased my factual knowledge of the geography, history, and economy of the host country.	4.56	0.56
14. Gave me an interest in foreign politics, international relations, and world affairs.	4.07	0.85
15. Allowed me to collect materials for teaching.	3.93	1.08
16. Increased my adaptability to new cultural environments.	4.28	0.77
17. Increased my adaptability to my own environment.	3.67	1.05
18. Developed my problem-solving ability.	3.62	0.93
19. Increased my understanding of my international students.	3.98	0.81
20. Motivated me to look for other similar international opportunities for the future.	4.45	0.76
21. Made adaptability to other cultures easier for me.	3.94	0.86
22. Helped me to find that other cultural differences are not major barriers for scholarly activity.	4.11	0.84
23. Provided a good experience personally.	4.77	0.56
24. Provided a good experience professionally.	4.63	0.61
25. Was not worth the financial effort.	2.62	0.87

Means and Standard Deviations for 40 Items Reflecting Perceived Benefits (N=87)

(Cont'd)

	Mean	SD
26. Made me a strong supporter for internationalizing education in the community college.	4.43	0.74
27. Increased my enthusiasm for teaching.	4.03	0.87
28. Expanded my perceptions of research areas in my field.	3.66	1.04
29. Instilled new values and attitudes in me as a person and as an American.	3.97	0.84
30. Confirmed to me that the American educational system is the best.	3.20	1.09
31. Allowed me to make specific changes in the written material used in the classroom.	3.41	0.98
32. Provided international examples to use in my teaching.	4.25	0.81
33. Motivated me to participate in international activities on my campus.	3.86	0.90.
34. Provided the opportunity for me to become a resource person for cooperative programs between my college and foreign educational organizations.	3.55	0.96
35. Provided the opportunity for me to become a resource person for my fellow faculty/administrators.	3.91	0.87
36. Motivated me to take actions to introduce global perspectives into my classes.	4.09	0.79
37. Improved my ability to make friends and meet strangers.	3.61	0.97
38. Encouraged me to write articles for professional publications.	3.17	1.06
39. Motivated me to use the Internet more.	3.17	1.08
40. gave me the opportunity to develop friendships with my colleagues overseas.	4.26	0.84

Appendix H

Key Words Grouped to Create *Motivation*
Response Categories

Categories	Key Words and Phrases from Questionnaires
Acquire professional knowledge/research	another country…could share our expertise
	anthropologist…enables me to make some comparisons
	compare notes with international colleagues
	constantly incorporating these (cultures) in my teaching
	curiosity about British education system
	education in other countries
	expand…contacts...among math teachers
	faculty teaching in area must be aware of trade, exports
	finish another master's degree
	follow-up on tour year before
	further my ed needs...obtain materials for teaching
	gain international perspective on teaching & counseling
	improve my Spanish
	interviewed Russian business people
	keep up in my field
	knowing international professors
	learn about...different pedagogy in different systems
	learn about...partnerships in Colleges of Further Ed
	learned of mid-level adult credential available in UK
	liked idea of observing another college
	need to do research
	obtain specific info to share with students
	opportunity to acquire materials/info to use in classroom

	professional and personal interest
	professional development,...to enliven teaching
	research opportunity
	see how my discipline was taught
	see how Russian medical ed system works
	seemed to pose...same challenges...American higher
	studying and learning of their system...and higher ed
	to collect specimens & photos to use in class
	to study Eng Lit, my other field of teaching
	topic: Mexican colonial lit
	tradition of cross-ed activities in higher ed
	unique professional development experience
	wanted to do research and teach
	working on dissertation
	exchange of ideas concerning the education systems of
Interest in other cultures	...insight...of the countries we visited
	a continued interest in learning & doing more
	appreciation & understanding of all cultures
	being immersed in a new culture
	cultural exchange aspect
	curiosity about ...
	curiosity about the world
	explore new cultures
	I love experiencing different cultures
	information to share with students and faculty
	interest in cross-cultural comparisons
	interest in culture, travel, and education
	interest in other cultures

	interest in other cultures
	learn about and study another culture
	learn about culturals (sic)
	learn more of country's hist & geog
	live in another culture
	meet people from another part of our plant
	opportunity to visit post-communist Central Europe
	participating in culture of another country
	spoke with several faculty who had been there prior.
	to experience life outside the United States
	to experience other cultures
	to view foreign culture firsthand
	visit another nation
	wanted to expand my horizons
	appreciate other cultures
Personal satisfaction/ curiosity	...to countries that I had not been to
	adventure
	career stimulation
	challenge to work in another language...
	change that adds diversity and vitality to life
	curiosity--change of pace
	eager to go and visit there
	I speak some Polish...grandparents having emigrated
	meet people
	my wife's family is from...
	needed to do something different
	opportunity to do something different
	search for new experiences
	volunteering to set up data base...computer experience
	wish to know first hand about Eastern Europe
	broaden my perspective
	colleagues spoke highly...experience

	curiosity
	curious
	invigorated me
Enjoy travel	an opportunity to travel
	desire to see the world
	go to Central America
	I enjoy traveling
	interest in travel
	interest in travel & opportunity to go to…
	interest in travel…
	like to travel
	love of Great Britain and of travel abroad
	love of travel
	love of travel
	travel opportunity
	travel very important to me
	wanted to see Europe
	wanted to travel abroad
	love of travel
	opportunity to travel
Opportunity came up	a colleague's suggestion
	a faculty person…sent me information
	colleagues...spoke positively of their experiences
	college sent me to observe its program in England
	exchange opportunity…open to counselor
	I was invited to
	invitation by friend
	opportunity to teach...was offered
	requirement at NYU
Costs low	cost down
	expense was minimal
	little personal expense
	low cost
	offer of financial assistance from…

	scholarship provided
Timing good	few logistics
	opportunity for short-term exchange
	sabbatical leave opportunity
	short term--2 weeks so wouldn't disrupt

Appendix I

Key Words Grouped to Create *Impediment* Response Categories

Categories	Key Words and Phrases from Questionnaire	
None	(college) always supportive	
	all part of living in a different culture	
	most impediments removed	
	no impediments	
	no real impediments	
	no	no
	no	no
	no	no
	no	no
	no	no
	no	no
	no	no
	no	no
	no	no
	no	no
	no	no
	no	
	none	no
	none	no
		no
	none	no
		no
	none	
	none whatsoever	
	not in one I participated in	
	not personally	
	not really	

Lack of institutional/ government support	Business office & VCCS regulations…tiresome
	Chair and Dean didn't support the program
	Chair and Dean opposed…made the going difficult
	college central office lack of cooperation
	college couldn't make up its mind
	college would not grant …additional leave
	Fulbright (DC) …very slow to provide info
	great deal of paperwork (student trips)
	had to get colleagues to cover my classes
	idiots in the business office
	lack of support from administration
	making initial (foreign) contacts
	my college's lack of interest
	poor management by Fulbright, United States govt agencies
	working thru VCCS and state government
	need better training and instruction
Financial considerations	$
	(college's) refusal to support (financially)
	…financial
	cost
	cost restrictions
	cost!
	financial
	had to generate our own funding
	lack of money
	no financial support
	personal money that I needed

Length of stay too short	...time intensive ...run out of time 2-week stay more time needed trips short, highly condensed wasn't long enough
Activity differed from stated purpose	extraordinary differences in ...students more than one school should be visited teaching schedule greater than (foreign) colleagues was a tour--not really a working exchange more scheduled than time
Medical problems	medical complications landed me in hospital personal health problems wife's sickness
Poor timing of visit	students in finals...opportunity to meet limited timing of exchange...better to have been there when... wasn't best time...national exams
Limited foreign language ability	language language limited foreign language capability
Logistical problems in academic area	film had to...adapted for foreign VCR lack of (college) computer time...had to subscribe
Hostile working /social environment	hostile climate, hostile social environment, many did not accept me

Appendix J

Key Words Grouped to Create *Value to the Community College* Response Categories

Categories	Key Words and Phrases from Questionnaire
Broaden faculty global perspective	allows global perspective...(not) provincial mentality (faculty)...increase and expand cultural awareness
	awareness & exposure to other cultural experiences
	better idea of different cultures
	better sense of international culture
	broaden experience
	broaden faculty outlook
	broaden international understanding & perspectives
	broaden perspectives on the world
	broadens experiences
	broadens one's perspective on education, cultures...
	broadens one's perspective on life and self
	broadens perspective
	can compare and contrast them and us
	cannot afford to be insular in our world
	cannot appreciate another culture without...experience
	CC needs to lead changing mind-set ...international curriculum
	CC professionals...less provincial
	combating ignorance...of "have nots"
	cultural & professional aspects ...tremendous
	develop sense of global economy
	easier to understand own society

enriching to faculty
exchange of ideas...cultural experience
expand horizons of faculty
expand the understanding between ...collegiate communities
expands vistas
explore how other cultures...
expose faculty to different cultures
faculty benefit going to... shocked...Hollywood stereotypes...
faculty have little or no international perspective
faculty have not traveled...limited perspectives
faculty...expanding horizons
gain perspective
global awareness and understanding
global community...make effort to benefit ourselves/students
global village...can learn from other cultures
growth and understanding in colleges in isolated areas
keeps from narrow minded
no appreciation for their(student) culture or values
notion of community changed ...global...means sister colleges
offer faculty experience with culture other than American
promotes cultural sensitivity
relate international info & cultural perspectives
teachers...globalizing their instruction
to develop broad perspectives...our students (not) have

Improve professional performance as a teacher	benefits students they teach
	better teacher
	brings other cultures into classes
	broadens perspective of how teaching/learning facilitated
	culture…enable…incorporate materials in class
	diverse students…understanding where coming from
	enhances…ability to teach
	international students…better deal with our students
	larger one's world the more... to offer students
	more life experiences…affect lives of others
	more transcultural aspects (in) courses
	…more real to students
	new materials/information acquired for my classroom
	revise and improve teaching style
	should see interest displayed by students…when told
	substantive info for preparation for teaching
	we have many international students
Broaden student global perspective	another country is like another world to (our students)
	bring vitality into classes
	broaden scope of curriculums for students
	faculty educates students for…world community
	help them (faculty) become better informed
	knowledge …shared with faculty and students
	need to see ourselves more as…global community

	offer students international perspective
	prepare students for global competition
	social... respect
	students have little or no international perspective
	students to become more internationally aware
	students...quite a cultural awakening
Personal growth/ change	break out of normal routine
	change people in positive ways
	expands individual horizons & goals
	high point of teaching career
	observed strong positive change in faculty
	opportunity for personal and professional growth
	preventing stagnation
	professors...avoid getting stale...burnout
	renew you
	vehicle for faculty renewal
Understand another education system	pros/cons of instructional programs
	another perspective on education
	benefited greatly...observing different educational systems, different perspectives
	enhanced ...professional challenges, administrative policies
	foster collegiality between faculties of two nations
	insight (of) other medical facilities
	see what is good and bad in both systems
	to learn about other educational systems

	UK and United States have similar missions…UK national exam…
Obtain professional knowledge (not related to teaching performance)	comparing RN functions (United States vs. foreign)
	international curriculum
	learned much about operation of economies of…
	learning of languages interesting
	makes theories come to life
	new perspectives on education
	professional expertise
	without (programs)…isolated, less info of field of study
Confirm American values	appreciate more what one has here
	others…are worse off than we are in the USA
	part of higher… that's what profs do
	see Americans are privileged people...cherish it more
	share importance of education of Americans
	…confirmed (values)
Appreciate own education system	appreciate own system
	appreciate strength of our CC system
	new perspective and appreciation for VCCS
	provides valuable perspective on own system
No-stay with local focus/not worth effort	… great caution, …(exchange) hard bargain
	not sure needed…more focus on local community

CURRICULUM VITAE

Stephen Z. Kovacs was born in Akron, Ohio, and is an American citizen. He received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Akron in 1965. He received a Master of Arts from the University of Southern California in 1979, a Master of Business Administration from Fairleigh Dickinson University in 1974, and a Master of Arts from the University of Akron in 1970. After a 27-year career in the U.S. Army he began a career in community college education. He is currently employed as the business manager for the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College.

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